

I'll Catch Fire and Burn Up

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I'll Catch Fire and Burn Up

by [TheKingInGreene](#)

Summary

While on the road alone with Daryl, Beth unexpectedly falls into her first heat.

Chapter 1: I

Well they come and pull me from my house
And they drag my body through the streets
And the sun's so hot I think I'll catch fire and burn up
in the summer air so moist and sweet
- "Heretic Pride" by The Mountain Goats

Beth is uncomfortable. The sun hasn't even risen, and the anxious, desperate feeling that started when she climbed out of the car trunk the morning before is creeping back in. She had felt better, lighter, almost care free when they first walked away from the burning shack but the feeling didn't last.

As the darkness fades the buzz of the alcohol is replaced with a pounding in her head, and a deep ache in every muscle. Beth's skin starts to feel too tight, too warm. Sweat beads at her temples, and pools under her breasts and arms and between her legs. Her shirt is damp and her jeans down right swampy. She wants to blame the sensation on the climbing temperature and oppressive humidity. But she can't ignore the way the warmth seems to be pushing up from inside her, pulsing along her scalp and heavy in her pelvis in a way she has never felt before.

By the time the sun is fully above the horizon she can't deny what is happening. She spends far too long agonizing over how she is going to tell him, trying to guess how he might react. She is blind to the world around her, lost in her head and following his path without even registering it. Eventually she just blurts it out, as if keeping the words inside is adding to her physical distress.

"I think... I.. I'm going into heat..." Her feet stop, eyes glued to the wings on his back.

Daryl's eyes flick back to her then he grunts, his steps slowing but never stopping.

"What? ... I didn't know" She can't stop herself from rambling as she scurries to catch up. The words are horrifying but they just keep coming. "I think this is serious, a big deal...I've never... um, this is the first time... my first... heat... they had said, when they did dynamic testing at school. But that was like grade 5 and Daddy had me go on suppressants after there was an incident with another Omega in my class falling into a sudden heat freshman year...But after the farm I didn't have any more suppressants and it never happened and, well I just didn't really think it would, you know now...or ever... and I... I don't.....I think... Daryl, it won't be long."

Daryl stops and Beth freezes a few feet behind him. He lets loose a long sigh before he turns, his gaze traveling over her from boot to head. He looks directly into her eyes before he finally speaks.

“I know.”

Beth's eyes widen and she stops panicking long enough to finally, really take him in. His shoulders are tense, hands tight on his bow, knuckles white, nostrils flared, scenting. He is clearly on edge.

"Oh"... Her voice is soft because she understands and embarrassment is flooding through her making her impossibly warmer. Daryl can already smell her heat.

She is suddenly very aware of his dynamic. He's never flaunted it; he has a temper and a short fuse but has never gotten his way using alpha commands or thrown his pheromones around to scare and intimidate like Shane had. He never demanded obedience like Rick had after the farm fell. None the less Beth has always known that Daryl's an alpha, and now she can smell him in a way she never has before. On some level that is why she doesn't hesitate to keep following him, stumbling through the forest as if on auto pilot.

Her feet move of their own accord as her brain is busy trying to remember everything she ever heard about dynamics. A montage of health classes, magazine articles, TV and movies mix with everything she has heard since the turn. Horror stories of heats bringing down safe zones and evacuee camps, theories about how walkers are still drawn to the pheromones omegas put out, predictions that omegas are quickly going extinct. That they serve no use in this harsh new world.

"You should leave me. I know heats make omegas vulnerable, noisy, weak... weaker. I won't be able to fight, or run. I'll attract walkers, maybe a herd." She has stopped again, eyes down. Her voice working itself higher as her fingers twist her bracelets angrily.

As she thinks on the liability she is the anger and defiance she felt the previous night during her drunken fight with Daryl comes flooding back into her system. For a few short moments it overpowers her distress. She burns hot with fury. Fury at herself, her designation; at this situation; at how cruel and unfair this world has proven to be time and time again.

Daryl stops and slowly swivels around, eyes glaring. He is clearly offended. His lip curls, hands fist.

“Girl...I gotcha, aint gonna leave you.”

His voice has an edge to it, a proclamation of intent delivered with the weight of alpha timber, and she is ashamed of the impact it has on her. In an instant the rage that was threatening to pour out of Beth shifts into something else, heavy and throbbing low in her belly. Daryl's nostrils flare as he inhales sharply, his eyes widen and she's not sure if she should laugh or cry. She wishes for the ground to open and swallow her whole; but of course it doesn't and Daryl is still stopped staring at her, waiting for something. She doesn't trust her voice so she just nods and he turns to keep leading them through the brush.

Chapter 2: II

When they leave the trees it's directly into a graveyard, they weave through the field of headstones. Daryl's eyes constantly flick between scanning the long grass and checking the horizon as he steers them closer to the building that runs parallel to the plots. He sees no signs of occupation but knows he needs to be extra vigilant with Beth in this state. He can feel her gaze like a weight on his back and he just knows she hasn't even been looking where she is walking. In fact, Beth doesn't seem to really notice they have left the forest until the steps of the funeral home are under her feet. Then her head pops up, wide eyes scanning the area surprise clear on her flushed face.

"Gonna clear it. See if we can hole up here for a few days." He only speaks once she is looking at him, wanting to make sure she understands what's happening.

Daryl waits to see her nod before he's knocking his fist against the door frame. Then he waits another minute before pushing it open and leading them through all the rooms on the main floor with his bow raised. Daryl doesn't ask for her help with clearing the building, aware of how distracted Beth is. Daryl definitely doesn't think about how badly Beth's state has distracted him. She may have been walking behind him, but since they left that shine shack he has been hyper aware of everything about her; every foot step, hitch in breath, every time her pheromones announced her cycling emotions.

"I'm so sorry."

He is checking a closet in the hallway when her quiet voice pulls him back into the parlour filled with display caskets.

"Why ya sorry?" Daryl is truly confused, he never learned much about dynamics but he knows she doesn't control this.

"You shouldn't have to deal with this." She waves her hand gesturing vaguely to herself.

He scoffs. "Why not? Is my fault. Ya were fine for what? Almost 2 years without them suppressants? Then one night in a tight space with me..." He trails off.

"And I lose my dang mind and drag you all over Georgia for a drink." She finishes for him with a breathy laugh, "Guess you got under my skin Mr. Dixon."

She's staring up at him, through her lashes, her big blue doe eyes shining in the morning sun that's pouring in through the gauzy curtains. Daryl tells himself not to stare and is certain he is not successful. Tells himself he is being a fucking creep. He desperately needs some space to clear his head so he keeps moving, heading up the stairs. He checks the upper floor with her trailing behind him in a daze. He picks a nice looking, well furnished bedroom at the end of the hall and ushers her inside.

"Ya stay here, get settled. Imma check the basement, secure the doors." He explains as he drops his pack just outside the door then hurries to the top of the stairs before she can protest.

He doesn't like leaving her alone but he needs to get away from her, everything her body is putting out is so much more powerful in the enclosed air of the funeral home. It was easier for him to pretend it was having no impact on him outside. Yet, for some reason, he finds himself stopping and looking back at her. She's standing in the open doorway her fingers clutching the wood of the frame, eyes impossibly wide. He doesn't mean to speak but finds the reassurances slipping past his lips despite his intentions.

"Ya holler if you need anything. I'll be back up here real soon."

Her response is the same gulping and nodding thing she did earlier in the woods. He nods back then flees down the stairs. He hears the soft click of the door when he hits the landing and swears he can breathe a little easier.

Daryl listens to the sounds of her walking around as he moves down to the lower levels. He can't push her from his mind even while he puzzles over the walkers fixed up to look like normal corpses in the basement. He decides he isn't really surprised that she's an O. It fits with everything he has come to know about her. She's always trying so hard to take care of everyone. Her endless patience with Little Asskicker. The way she worked so hard to make the prison a home for all of them. Her unwavering determination to find their family despite everything that's happened.

He hears a few muffled thumps and a dragging noise like she is moving the furniture around. Can't stop himself from trying to picture exactly what she is doing, how she is preparing. He tries to make note of all the useable supplies stashed around the building but his mind keeps getting tied up imagining her making herself comfortable in the little room at the end of the hall. He thinks back to her flushed skin and heavy scent while he uses a bottle of water to wash the layers of grime and sweat from his hands face and chest in the kitchen sink. Wonders if she will look different when this is done, if she'll act different and if he'll treat her any different.

Yes, he is distracted, but that doesn't stop him from securing the place; knowing it's on him to keep her safe and whole through this. Determined that this time he will not fail. Daryl strings up an alarm at the bottom of the front steps and blocks the door from the inside with a heavy cabinet. He strings an alarm at back door but leaves it unblocked, an exit if they need it, then he heads back up the stairs.

He moves to take up position, back against her closed door. He has no intention of opening it, he plans on staying in the hall awake, on guard; but he can't not listen to her, smell her. He hears her pacing for a few minutes then she seems to settle against the door right behind him. His skin tingles, it's like he can feel the heat coming off her right through the wood. For a long time all he hears is frustrated breaths and sad sniffles. Not the sounds he is expecting to hear. No breathy moans, no whines, no sounds of pleasure.

Daryl doesn't really know how this is supposed to go for her. He has no experience to draw on. Has never really spent time alone with an omega, let alone a heated one, before. All of

his few sexual partners have been beta. He falls into rut a few times a year; but has always hurried through it alone, never allowed himself to indulge in it. Yet as soon as Beth announced this would be her first heat it became important to him that this be good for her. Some urge, something from deep in his hindbrain that Daryl has never felt before, is insistent that Beth be able to look back on this progression knowing he kept her safe and happy. As if, on some level, this could make up for his failures at the prison.

Daryl rests uncomfortably against the door for maybe a half hour. He can smell her discomfort, her fear, it mixes with the heavy scent of her heat, poking at his hindbrain. It combines with the sweltering temperature and the harsh afternoon sun creeping through the windows leaving him feeling distinctly unsettled. He tries to focus his senses outside the house, to keep watch but his concentration is shot. He's holding his breath every time he hears Beth shift or adjust position, hoping she will move to open the door but being too chicken shit to just check on her.

The second the door handle starts to move Daryl is off the floor, back flat against the far wall of the hallway and staring at the doorway. He peers at her from under his hair, chewing at the skin on his thumb before he finally finds his voice.

“Ya ok?”

She nods, but Daryl doesn't think she looks ok. Bare feet, bare legs, hair down and wet as if she's managed to wash it, wearing his faded black tee with the stretched out neck falling down her shoulders, eyes red like she's been crying, no belt, no knife, no goddamned bra, fingers twisting in the beads on her wrist. She's undone, unarmed, clearly scared and overwhelmed and it seems to physically hurt him to see her like this. As if his entire being has become a raw open wound that will not heal until she is comfortable and content.

“Girl, tell me what ya need.” He keeps his voice soft.

She wrings her hands nervously, gazing up at him through her lashes.

“I built a nest,” she gestures behind her into the bedroom, “but it's not right. I...maybe if you...”

She is practically shaking and Daryl thinks she must be nervous, that he's scaring her. So he slouches, hunching his shoulders and trying to appear small. She takes a deep breath, seems to steady herself and then looks up locking eyes with him.

“I thought if it smelled like you maybe I could calm down, get some rest.”

Daryl can't find his words. He knows she is asking for his help, and he wants to help her, so he just nods. The relief that is clear on her smiling face soothes Daryl so much that he doesn't hesitate to follow her into her den.

The scent of her is so thick in the room that Daryl can taste her. It stuns him. He stops in his tracks as his eyes find the nest in the far corner. It's like she made a fort from all the furniture and blankets. He can see the mattress sticking out and he thinks it looks more comfortable

than anywhere he has slept in years, since long before the turn. Soft, plush; like a cozy cave. He's never even seen a real nest in person before (his mama had long stopped bothering to build them by the time he was old enough to remember), but he has no doubt that Beth's is perfect.

Beth turns and looks him over. Daryl can see her trying to assess his reaction. She starts babbling, trying to explain.

"I went down the hall to clean up in the bathroom. Found some jugs of distilled water under the sink. It felt good, so much better to be kind of clean. I couldn't put my dirty clothes back on. I just couldn't do it. So I went into your pack and grabbed this."

She pulls at the belly of his shirt. Daryl eye's locked on the hemline as it bounces from above her knee to mid thigh and back.

"You were downstairs and I was feeling so overwhelmed ... a little lost. I didn't know what to do. This wasn't something we talked about in my house." She huff's, almost a laugh, and Daryl is a little surprised that it sounds more amused than hysterical. "My designation was not discussed, everything about it seemed inappropriate. So I was feeling nervous and scared and I could hear you but you seemed so far away."

She shrugs. Like she is explaining but also excusing herself from having to apologize. Before he can start beating himself up for leaving her alone and afraid she continues.

"I tried to remember what people are supposed to do when this happens." Beth pauses to blush furiously. She squirms, the muscles in her legs visibly clenching as her knees knock together then she sucks in a ragged breath. "It was like the idea of nesting flashed across my mind and then I couldn't stop thinking about it. So I just gave up fighting it. When I was done I felt safer, secure, I had this sense of accomplishment. "

She laughs again. It's quiet but sounds loud in this room.

"It's uncomfortable, how intense I feel about it. Never felt anything like this before." Her voice is earnest and breathy and Daryl finds himself actually wishing she will just keep talking. More than once in the first days they were running after the prison fell he had wished for her to just shut up; but here, now, in this room he welcomes the sound of her voice.

"Then I heard you come up the stairs... I couldn't even. I umm... I couldn't be in it because you were just out there. So close. So I thought maybe you could just come in. You can sit in the nest so I can too. I just feel better with you here."

Daryl can't respond. He's staring at her, hasn't moved an inch since he stopped walking, mouth hanging open sucking in loud breaths. He's frozen. Rendered mute and immobile by her scent and her request. Brain completely stalled by the idea of sitting in her nest, with her, while she is in heat. Her very first heat.

"Daryl?"

She's tentatively reaching out for his arm when he's finally able to pull himself together. He snaps his mouth closed and grabs her hand, interlacing their fingers. When he finally speaks his voice is so rough he doesn't recognize it.

"Whatever ya need, Girl."

Chapter 3: III

As her heart stutters for a moment she is convinced she is finally, actually, dying of embarrassment. Then he's moving forward, towing her along by their joint hands, until they're standing over her nest. Reaching out he runs his fingers lightly along the fabric of a plush looking pillow with a soft gaze and small smile turning up the corners of his mouth. All of a sudden she can smell Daryl, stronger than ever before, like maybe he has accidentally bombed her. His pheromones pushing into her senses, hinting at notes of excitement and happiness and Beth is flooded with boldness.

There is not a hint of hesitation when she moves. Beth drops to her knees and tug his boots off, then she's pulling him down towards the floor and pushing him into the pile of blankets and pillows she has constructed. Settling back, Daryl sinks into the pillows against the wall, his legs straight out over the mattress and she crawls after him, bringing herself up to her knees right beside him.

Beth knows she's being too forward, invading his space. She is waiting for him to snap, to push her away. A push that never comes. Instead, he opens his arms to her and then she's rubbing her face into the crook of his neck, breathing him in as he settles into her nest. He pulls her close so they are cuddled together. Beth's hands on his shoulders, her face buried in his neck. Being surrounded by the smell of him calms her, the anxious desperation she had been feeling receding as she had hoped. However, she hadn't anticipated the way that same scent would make the need that has been simmering in her burn brighter and more focused.

Maybe she zones out or falls asleep, because she doesn't mean to move. All of a sudden she's just there, in his lap, straddling Daryl. Grinding gently against him while rubbing her face in the crook of his neck. The coarse fabric of his pants scraping against the soft skin of her inner thighs, the ridge of his zipper pressing against her, his hands gripping her hips, his breath soft and wet against the shell of her ear, all combining with his alphas scent to bring the warmth that has been building inside Beth to boil over.

Shocked doesn't really begin to cover how she feels. Daryl is just letting her get away with this. His shoulders are tense but he's not pushing her away. Why is he being so gracious? Beyond horrified with herself, Beth can't believe what she's doing. At the same time she is enraptured with how it's making her feel. The thought of stopping, of removing herself from him, makes her feel hysteric. The conflicting emotions are so overwhelming to her that she pushes closer, clinging to his chest and letting her tears fall onto his shirt.

Daryl knows he should feel trapped, uncomfortable and angry. If he's honest with himself, which he usually is, he knows that would be his normal reaction to this sort of attention. As if anything about this situation is normal. As if the way he suddenly feels focused and strong and like he could actually serve a purpose for the first time since the group was lost is any stranger than him knowing how good it feels to have Beth Greene in his lap and pushed up tight against him.

He can't help but take a few moments to enjoy the way she's moving. Takes a deep lungful of

her heavy scent before stopping her rocking with pressure from his hands on her hips. His fingers find their way into her hair, as he asks her what she needs. Beth's only response is more tears, he can feel them soaking through his shirt, and loud ragged breaths that border on sobs. Using the fingers tangled in her hair, he tilts her face up.

Holding her gaze he asks again, "Girl, can ya tell me what ya need?"

"I don't know?" He can barely understand her rushed words through her tears. "I was gonna go off my suppressants in college. Fall into my first heat after I would have been able to research and prepare. My family always acted like it was improper. Me being omega was an unfortunate condition, it was neither acknowledged nor discussed. Now it's happening and I don't know what I'm supposed to do."

He's a little impressed by the fact she manages to push all those words out without taking a breath. The content of the words he has some issue with.

"Ya don't need to know how other people think ya should do it. All that shit was just an excuse to sell useless crap no one ever needed. Listen to ya body, just like ya did building this nest. Not being overwhelmed by some outside force, that's the wrong way to think about this. Is thousands of years of instinct and biology guiding ya. Ain't nothing wrong with ya. No matter what ya family did or didn't say about it."

He pushes strands of her hair off her wet face and tucks them behind her ear.

"Girl, this is ya own body telling ya exactly what ya need. Ya gotta figure out how to listen to it, to trust it." Daryl manages to keep his voice steady despite having no idea where he is pulling these words from.

It seems to him that around Beth he is somehow always talking when he doesn't mean to. He doesn't offer comfort and reassurances, never has, but he does with her. Even now he's rubbing her back. Small soft circles, with the flat of his palm. He tries not to dwell on the thought that this is easily the most intimate moment he can remember ever sharing with another person.

"Ya just gotta tell me what ya need, Girl."

"I can't, Daryl, how can I ask that?" her blush is intense, painted across her cheeks, and chest.

Avoiding his gaze, her pale blue eyes looking down. Slipping his finger along her cheek, under her chin, he tilts her face up until she finally relents and meets his eyes.

"What? Ain't like I'm gonna say no to anything ya could ask. Ain't gonna do nothing ya don't ask me to."

Blue eyes peer up at him; she is a tiny bit shorter even sitting perched in his lap. He doesn't want to influence her but he is filled with the need to see her happy and soothed. Unwilling to have her thinking whatever she might be feeling is wrong. There is no way she can ignore

her needs, not on his account. Not now.

Beth huffs out a breath and manages to stumble through her proposition, "Would you... With me... Will you see me through it? Will you partner me through my heat, Daryl?"

"Ya don't need to make it sound like a chore" He leans in, running his nose along her cheek, until his lips are pressed to her ear. "Ain't gonna be a hardship for me, Girl."

Daryl pulls back and watches her. He has no idea where his confident response comes from but he's more than happy to witness the glazed look in Beth's wide eyes and the way the flush across her pale skin deepens. When she recovers Beth shakes her head a little, grinning as she pushes down onto his lap harder than before, tilting her head and touching his lips with hers. Moist lips brush back and forth lightly across his mouth as he feels his cock hardening. She leans back and gives him the biggest smile while studying him. The first reaction he has is to look down, away from her piercing eyes and ashamed of his body and it's response to her, but some instinct straight from his hindbrain pushes him to hold her gaze and let her look. They lock eyes, it feels like so many long minutes, and her smile never falters. Daryl is certain no one has ever been this happy with him before and all he's done is popped wood so fast he feels like he's 14 again. That doesn't stop him from smiling back at her. Honestly, he's not sure he could wipe the grin off his face if he tried.

Chapter 4: IV

Chapter Notes

I feel like I should warn you this is just pure porn. At the same time, if you are even slightly surprised you just haven't been paying attention.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Beth's smiling as she looks into his eyes, searching for any sign of reluctance or regret. Deep blue eyes hold her gaze, peering back at her, and she's finding only willingness and excitement with a hint of embarrassment. The way Daryl's pheromones have continued to ramp up and mingle with hers in the confined space of the nest is heady. Their combined scents causing her hindbrain to flood her nervous system with a tingly excitement. A feeling that ratchets higher at the feel him hard, inside his pants, pushing up against the soft flesh of her labia. Yet, it's actually the sight of his grin, the idea that Daryl's excited, that he's going to enjoy this, that makes Beth brave enough to actually move things along.

Leaning into him she lets her instincts lead as she wraps her arms around his neck pulling their chests flush. She rubs the side of her face up against his. Chasing the delicious scrape of his facial hair against her cheek, the feel of his breath on her ear and neck. She keeps her face smooshed against him, foreheads touching even when she turns and pushes her tongue out, licking his lips softly. Daryl doesn't hesitate to part his lips as she pushes closer, pressing her mouth to his. Her focus narrows down to his tongue and teeth, their mingled breaths.

Beth only surfaces from the kiss when she feels Daryl's large palms moving up and down her sides. The worn shirt she's wearing bunching and shifting until he slips under it. Firm strokes from her waist to chest, fingers just brushing the sides of her breasts; the motion of his hands encouraging the rocking of her hips. Causing, somehow, even more heat and pressure to build low in her pelvis; until it eventually rises to fill her entirely.

The warmth continuing to flare and spike inside of her is like nothing she has ever felt before. Skin so warm it's starting to smother her. Heat radiating across her lower back and hips, filling her chest, and pushing down her limbs. She's flushed and tingling, her blood has settled in her finger tips, cheeks and pelvis, heavy and pooling, leaving her light headed and hazy. It's like she is floating and being pulled in multiple directions at the same time. She is almost overwhelmed with sensation yet so totally aware of all the places Daryl is touching her, of his scent on her, of his solid form all around her.

Her heart beat is loud in her own ears and the world outside her nest has been reduced to a low hum somewhere on the edge of her awareness. Daryl fills her senses and fans this thing growing inside of her. This tangle of heat and arousal and a need so desperate it seems to

have tangible weight. The need for Daryl to see her, to touch her. The certainty that if she is not the center of his attentions it will physically hurt.

She's only wearing Daryl's loose shirt and her panties but suddenly her clothes are too tight too warm. The feel of them against her skin is unbearable. Pulling away from his mouth she hurriedly yanks the shirt over her head. Before she can capture his lips again his mouth finds her breast. Licking at her, then pulling back to look softly at her spit soaked nipple while rolling it firmly between his thumb and forefinger and then sucking it between his lips. His large hand moving to eagerly palm her other other breast. Teeth scrape at the curve of her, biting gently into her soft flesh as his tongue works against her skin. She wonders how it's even possible that his wet mouth can somehow feel warmer than her fevered skin. Clutching at the back of his head she mouths wet kisses in his hair line. The sound of her heavy breathing mixes with the wet sounds of his sucking and biting and she floods with arousal. Beth has never been wet like this, didn't know she could actually drip with it.

The way her worn cotton panties are sliding against her soaked lips is amazing and somehow not even close to enough at the same time. Need is burning through her, so much more consuming and heavy than any arousal she has ever felt. Squirming, her hands move down to push at the waistband of her panties. Trying to move them down her thighs without pulling away from him. Despite her frantic wiggling he just keeps mouthing at her breasts, every lick and suck being echoed by the pulsing engorged feeling in her sex.

Eventually she pushes to her knees. Daryl simply sitting up taller and continuing to suckle at her as she pushes her panties down to her knees. Only stopping when she loses her balance and falls out of his lap and onto her side. Beth lands with a thump against the mattress, their legs tangled together. Catching Daryl's eye, she starts to laugh as she continues to struggle with the offending garment. He smirks and shakes his head.

"Already out of yer goddamned mind with lust for me?" He chuckles at his own joke.

"Daryl..." She whines his name between breathless giggles and tries batting her eyelashes up at him.

Behind his hair he's watching her, she can feel him looking, taking in every detail of her laid out and exposed on the nest beside him. He looks a little dazed, eyes wide and cheeks flushed. Beth likes it; she doesn't want him to stop looking, doesn't want to cover herself. She wants him to see her but she also needs more.

She whines again high pitched and wordless.

Shifting up to his knees he untangles their legs. He looms over her, so big and solid. Rough, dry fingertips trace her collar bone, drag down between her breasts and over her stomach. The pads of his thumbs rubbing over her hip bones and down the sides of her thighs to hook into the waistband of her panties just above her knees. Tugging down her panties Daryl sets them to the side and arranges her feet on the mattress so that he can kneel between them.

Hands running up and down her legs. Along her inner thighs, slowly spreading her legs

wider and wider. Exposing her fully to his gaze. It's only when he finally brushes a finger lightly against her labia that she realizes he's still fully clothed while she is stripped bare.

Sure hands tug at him urging him down to hover over her while she unbuttons his shirt with nimble fingers. Pushing the worn plaid fabric off his shoulders, she exhales in a gust at the sight of his broad chest. Fingers skating over his exposed skin, she feels the raised skin of his scars but doesn't linger, not wanting to make him uncomfortable. She explores, finding his nipples and teasing them lightly. He lowers himself over her and she relishes in the feel of his weight on her. Her kisses are eager, she pushes up into his space and he pushes back into her. She can't get enough of feeling her entire body pressing into his.

Eventually she urges him closer still, with a "come 'ere", that sounds more like a grunt than words.

She pulls him forward by the wrists until he's straddling her stomach and she can easily reach his pants. Hands hovering over his belt while she stares up into his eyes. Part of her feels like she should ask if he's still sure, if he really wants this, with her. Another part of her trusts that Daryl meant what he said, can feel the weight of his desire in the tension crackling between them and doesn't want to spoil the feeling with her insecurities. Before she can act one way or another Daryl moves his hands to cover hers, gently guiding them to undo his belt, and then the button and zipper on his pants.

Once his pants are open he shifts back, and Beth wiggles out from underneath him. He doesn't give her space, she likes the way he watches as she squirms against him. When she gets free of his legs she moves onto her knees and goes right back to kissing him as she helps him work his pants and boxers down over his hips. She only detaches from his lips to push them down each leg and peels off his socks, determined to have no barriers between them.

Some embarrassed, ashamed part of her is telling her not to look, but her hind brain is having none of it. She looks quickly, trying to be discreet. Then she looks again. She can't look away, her eyes are glued to his cock. Her mouth floods with saliva, she's drooling, the pre-cum beading on the tip of his cock too much for her. The sight of his arousal totally overwhelming her. She moves back, trying to get some air when her hindbrain fully takes over and she presents. Embarrassment flares again and she pushes her face into the mattress, as if to hide, but keeps her bum up in the air, knees spread wider than her shoulders.

Only a few seconds pass, but to her it feels like it could be hours. What must he think of her? So desperate, so needy. She squeezes her eyes shut against her own thoughts. Then before she can truly spiral into self loathing he touches her. Rough palms running up the backs of her thighs. The motion completely banishing the feelings that had just been threatening to over take her.

Daryl rubs at the flesh off her bum and thighs, his fingers firm as they push and massage. His movements are slow and precise. Working gradually closer and closer to her center as she trembles with excitement. Thick fingers run along the puffy swollen lips of her sex and before spreading her labia. He pushes her slick around, coating his digits and causing a loud squelch as he drags his fingers up over her clit and then back down across her taint. Soaking his palm and then pushing it flat against her clit. Rubbing and pressing as she pushes back,

her hard swollen nub grinding against his hand.

His whole body curls around her back as his long fingers push into her, causing more slick to spill out and all of the air to leave her lungs. Her muscles clenching on him as she gasps. His breath and the scruff from his face push into her shoulders, his hardness rubbing against her hip. She cums so easily, contracting and shaking on a seemingly endless loop. His fingers working her into a frenzy, none of her orgasms enough. It's not close to enough. She needs him, needs his knot. She whines, and he just keeps fingering her. It's torturous, maddening, she has to have more. She begs. The word please pouring from her lips over and over even as she's burying her face in her nest and cumming on his fingers.

Daryl stops. Pulls back from where he had wrapped himself around her, leaving her feeling cold and exposed. Before she can process what he's doing. He sinks back into the pillows beside her. Eyes hooded as he lifts her over him and back down onto his lap.

“Need to see ya face, so I know ya's alright, Girl.” His deep voice is rough, but he has such a soft expression on his face, open and unguarded like she has never seen.

She doesn't really get why he's asking, but understands that this request is important to him. So she doesn't protest, doesn't tell him she always thought you got knotted from behind. Instead she just does as he asks, because she trusts him.

Beth rubs against him. There is nothing between them. They are both bare and soaked with her slick. She shakes every time the tip of his cock pushes against her clit or catches against her opening. She thinks he's going to shift his hips or push into her but he's holding himself infuriatingly still while she rocks in his lap. Finally she realizes he's leaving it up to her, giving her total control of their coupling.

She hauls herself up, his hands moving to steady her hips, and reaches down grasping him until she is sitting on the tip of him. Finds herself so grateful she is looking right at him or she might have missed his sharp intake of breath as she starts to engulf him, the way his eyes clenched shut as if it were taking all of his considerable strength to remain so still. Sitting up straight, she braces her arms against his strong, broad shoulders and rocks gently. Her soaked walls slowly expand allowing her to take him in bit by bit, until her clit is wedged right against his coarse pubic hair.

Beth wants to be self conscious. Daryl's still holding himself so still and at first her rhythm is so awkward. She's feeling exposed like never before in her life, doesn't know what she's doing. But it feels good and once again her hind brain takes over. She is able to relax into it and starts moving smoothly. Soon she's leaning forward, breasts in his face, grinding into him, chasing a massive orgasm. Then he stops being still, he starts pushing up into her with little thrusts that quickly build. His grip on her hips tighten and his mouth finds a nipple. He starts making low groans, interspersed with muttered curses. Oh, how Beth loves these noises. At the sound of them falling unbidden from him Beth feels an undeniable burst of pride. She didn't even know he was capable of making sounds this desperate. They are not loud, but they are the most fascinatingly frantic sounds and she has managed to pull them from the quietest man she's ever know just by trusting her instincts.

She's pushed his pants off and is frozen, just kneeling over him, staring. He's worried she's seen something bad, that something's wrong with him. Can't remember the last time he actually looked closely at his dick. But then she shifts and he catches the expression on her face, and the only thing he can think to call it is hungry. She wipes at her mouth with the back of her hand. Gulps, making a low noise in the back of her throat and then seems to fling herself down. Her face is pushed down into the nest and her ass is up level with his face. Knees spread so wide he can see the wet pink of her cunt.

He can't breath. Holy fucking shit. Girl is presenting to him and he's going to stroke out. Thank Christ the sound of her keening spurs him into action. High pitched and desperate, a noise that reminds him of a rabbit stuck in a snare.

He runs his hands up and down the soft skin off her thighs, firm strokes from right under her ass to the bend of her knees. Trying to soothe her with the motion. He sees her relax, back arching as her shoulders drop further down into the tangle of blankets and pillows. He ghosts his palm along the small of her back, marveling at the deep curve of her spine. At how she's able to fall so open for him.

He lets his finger tips dig into the flesh of her ass. Massaging the muscles and watching her round cheeks bounce in response. He works down the back of her legs, pushing at her upper thighs enough to give further flashes of her cunt as her pussy lips spread open with the motion of his massage. He can feel her pushing back against him with her hips. He keeps working at her muscles, moving as slowly as he can towards her cunt.

The smell of her so heavy in the air is intoxicating, and it increases every time she's further exposed. His dick is so hard he has to grind it against her hip to ease the ache of it. She's trembling and the pheromones she's pumping out are straight lust and anticipation. Slowly he works his fingers closer and closer and until they're running along the wet golden curls and plush lips framing her center. He's shaking, using all his self restraint to move slowly and gently as he's spreading her open and running his fingers through her folds.

He gathers up her wetness. Coating his fingers, pushing down towards her clit. She's so wet and so warm. Water and fire at the same time. Her skin is feverish and damp her arousal beyond wet. It's so slippery and smooth that even his clumsiest movements glide effortless and steady against her. So wet there is a loud sucking sound, like walking through deep mud, when he drags his fingers back through her folds to rub his knuckle firmly into the thin skin just below her asshole. His entire hand is soaked, so he pushes the palm of it against the hard bundle of nerves nestled at the top of her sex. Beth's hips rock back and she groans. The sound is low and hoarse, muffled into the fabric of the nest.

Daryl doesn't know what he likes more. The noises or the desperate way she is grinding into his palm. He's shifting his angle and pressure trying to find what produces the best noise and movement from her. He's mentally cataloging how she responds to his attention, finding he is able to repeatedly pull these amazing, needy noises out of her.

Daryl holds her hips steady with one hand while he works two fingers into her with the other. Slick pours out of her, dripping down his forearm. Beth exhales sharply, her entire body constricting tightly for a second and then fully relaxing. He curls his entire body around her back as he starts to move his fingers. Face pressed into her shoulder he can just catch glimpses of her face as she cums on his fingers. He keeps working her, surrounding her and holding her up with an arm under her hips as she peaks again and again. His focus narrowing and intensifying in the same way it does when he tracks and hunts.

Beth's moaning shifts, becomes more defined until he realizes she's speaking. Just the word please over and over as she rocks back into him. She's begging him, he's floored. It's the best sound he has ever heard. It's fucking music. He wants to hear it as many times as possible. All too soon, it's too much for her. Her orgasms are nearly constant, she's shaking, and her scent is bordering on anxious she's so riled up. He just knows she NEEDS his knot. His dick feels like iron and his knot is aching to burst. He absolutely has to fuck her. He pulls back, ghosting his hand along the back of her thighs. Using every ounce of self control not to thrust into her from behind. Instead he sinks back into the nest, hauling her along into his lap. He needs her to be in control, doesn't trust that he has the restraint she deserves.

He tries to explain. He's never rutted a heated omega. He's never knotted anyone. He's going to, because she has asked him to and because he really, really wants to, but he's going to make sure it all happens at her discretion. That it's good and she feels safe, just like she deserves. He produces words that are somehow rushed and stilted at the same time. Doesn't really manage to explain anything at all yet she offers no protest. Once again pushing herself tight against him in his lap as it's her new favorite seat.

He's using every ounce of self control to hold himself still as she rubs her cunt along the shaft of his dick over and over. Every time his swollen tip, aching to knot, pushes on her clit she gasps. He wonders if she is actually trying to kill him, if that is some side effect of heat that no one talks about, 1% of omegas go all praying mantis and fuck their partners to death. Then he wonders when he lost his damn mind. Eventually, thank God, she lifts up to her knees, grabbing his dick and lining him up with her pussy. Daryl's staring at her pussy lips spreading and slowly swallowing him. The sensation and sight together is too much, he has to slam his eyes shut to keep from fucking up into her. Gripping her hips tight enough to bruise he fights not to move as she slowly lowers herself onto his dick. She starts to rock tentatively against him and it doesn't take long until her movements are fluid and smooth.

He's on fire, she's an inferno all around him. Every little movement she's makes feels amazing, his balls aching almost as much as his knot. His entire body on edge and awash in sensation. Every time he is able to crack his eyes open she is staring right at him. Her mouth is open and her eyes are searching him. He doesn't know what she's looking for, but it's too much. Holding her gaze is like trying to look into the goddamned sun.

She's leaning forward, forearms braced on his shoulder, fingers gripping into the hair at the base of his neck. Her titties are bouncing in his face. Pale skin all flushed with perky pink nipples. Suddenly he just cannot possibly stay still any longer. He's pushing up into her, meeting her thrusts. He sits straighter and rubs his face all over her pretty, little tits. Sucks at her nipples and wonders how it can possibly feel this good to be inside another person. Hell,

he don't even liked being too close to most other people. But not her, nope, feels like he wants to fucking crawl inside her. He has never felt this good before, none of the times he had ever blown his knot during a rut consumed him like this, no high or drunk had ever come close to completely rewiring him like this. Never felt like couldn't possibly get close enough to someone, like there is no way he can touch enough of her.

He wraps his arms tight around her shoulders. Holding her flush against him so he can suck ravenously at her chest while continuing to fuck up into her with firm steady thrusts. She chokes on a moan and he feels her cumming on his cock. He can feel the head of his cock aching and starting to swell, his knot instantly wanting to bust as she contracts around him. He tries to hold back, but then she calls his name and he doesn't stand a chance. As he feels his knot expanding, and her cervix falling open to accommodate and hold it, the pleasure is so intense he thinks he blacks out for a few seconds. The next thing he registers is the way she relaxes into him, a pliant bundle of limbs in his lap. Head tucked into his shoulder nose huffing at his neck as he pants and gasps for breath.

He's tingly and exhausted. Feels hazy, almost drunk, totally relaxed and content. One hand spread across her lower back, the fingers of the other tangling in the ends of her messy hair. They are locked together, and he finds himself glad for it, not ready to let her go. She shifts, moving her legs from being bent underneath her to wrapping around his hips. She manages with minor shuffling and only once exclaims, wordless and high pitched, as her movement pulls sharply against the connection locking them together. When she is seated more comfortably against him, she kisses his throat several times before settling back against his neck.

Her face is still pressed into him when she huffs out a breath and quietly questions him, "Was that ok? Ya know, how it's supposed to be?"

It's never bothered him that he hadn't knotted anyone. Certainly doesn't now, he's sure she's the only one he will ever want to give it to. Yet he feels so nervous, like he is confessing something, when he manages to answer her. Speaking softly into her tangled pale hair.

"Ain't gave my knot to nobody before you, but I know I never felt anything better that what we just did."

Beth doesn't respond, but he can feel her lips pulling into a smile against his throat. She sighs contentedly and wiggles closer, every movement echoed where his knot is still held tightly deep inside her.

Chapter End Notes

I know I described the anatomy of a knot differently than most. It's just that when I think about human bodies this makes more sense.

Chapter 5: V

Chapter Notes

This one has some feelings, some fluff and some filth. Thanks for reading. I appreciate you all.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Time passes unevenly, seconds dragging out to feel like hours and then lurching forward. The sunlight in the room seems to jump distinctly and suddenly, when he knows it made the same gradual progression towards darkness that it makes every afternoon. It feels like he's only been holding her for a few moments, but he knows it's been at least a few hours. She's out cold, was before his knot even started to ease off. Deeply deeply asleep. Body so limp he might be afraid for her if he couldn't feel her breath on his throat. It's oddly reminiscent of Merle sleeping off one of his benders. Her face is mashed into his neck, drool smeared from her open mouth onto his collarbone. Dead to the world.

He holds her there and he doesn't want to let her go, something deep within him soothed by the weight of her in his arms. Even after he's softened and slipped out of her. Even after their spend has dried to a tacky film on both their thighs. Even as he realizes the room has started to darken, afternoon light slipping away. Eventually he forces himself into action. Shifts around, lying her down, on her side, and tucking her into the nest. Smile pulling at his lips as he watches her snuggle down into the blankets. He lets his hand squeeze at her hip, his finger pushing gently into her soft the curve of her before he forces himself to his feet.

He pulls his pants up over his hips, forgoing his threadbare boxers, and doesn't bother to button them or put on his belt. Leaves his boots where she had dropped them beside the nest. Goes into the hall grabs his crossbow and pack from the floor. Pulls them into the den, leans the crossbow against the wall beside the door, and sets his pack next to hers, under the big window. He pads down the hall, on bare feet, to the bathroom. He leaves the doors to both rooms open, making sure he'll hear if she makes any noise. His piss splatters loudly in the almost dry toilet, joining the little amount Beth had left in the bowl earlier in the day. He goes through the vanity pulling out some towels, wash rags, a bar of soap and the open jug of distilled water she had already started. He sees two more jugs with the seals still in tact under the sink. Really, an amazing find. Daryl uses one of the wash rags and a few splashes of the water to clean the tackiness and sweat from his skin, discards it in the useless bathtub. Gathers the rest of the supplies and returns to their den.

He's been quiet, but making noise. Enough that he thought Beth would have woken up but she hasn't moved at all. These past few weeks when they have been sleeping in the woods she woke easy, aware of every little sound. Now, she doesn't stir at all, even when he pulls the blankets back. Somehow he knows she just needs to rest, that she's exhausted. It also reassures him that she has this sweet contended look on her face. Doesn't think he has ever

seen her look this unburdened, not even on the best days at the prison when she was so hopeful. It's like she is now able to let go of everything that has been haunting them, finally resting.

He's able to move her like a rag doll, spreading a towel over their nest and then arranging her on her on top it. A flare of embarrassment rising in him when she still doesn't wake. Hindbrain beating down his urge to shake her awake. Her rest is essential, non-negotiable, but that primal part of him also won't allow her to be left a mess like this. He considers his options. In the end, instead of tucking her back in and letting her clean herself when she wakes, he wets a washcloth and rubs it against the bar of soap. Starts with her face, then her hands, then works down each limb towards her middle. He is especially gentle when he reaches her chest, seeing the dark bruises starting to form from his sucking and kissing on her soft pale skin. He lets his thumbs trace lightly over the darkest marks. He washes her belly, back, arm pits, and finally gently cleans her sex, slowly washing the dried cum and slick away. His attentions leaving her skin pink and damp.

Even when he's dragging the cold wet cloth over her fevered skin she doesn't wake up. At first he's surprised that Beth is still so warm to his touch. Then he reminds himself that this will take days. He didn't fuck the heat out of her with one knot, no matter how it felt. If anything this is just getting started. An idea that should scare him, that he has volunteered himself for something so unknown and intimate, but it doesn't. For the first time in a very long time Daryl is excited to see what's going to happen next.

He is staring down at her, the desire to take care of her burning steadily inside of him, taking root at the very center of his being. It surprises him, just how specific the urges are. Wonders what he'd be doing if they hadn't found this place, if they were out in the woods with no wash rags, no water. Unsolicited the image of him cleaning her up with his mouth invades his head. He's shocked at the thought, embarrassed and intensely aroused. It's almost instant, how fast he gets hard. He has to palm himself, rearranging his cock in his pants. He is honestly unsure how something so filthy can be so deeply appetizing.

He lets the thought play out, she would wake up, looking down her belly at him with those big blue eyes, how she would taste, the noises she would make as he cleans every spec of them from her tender flesh. The fantasy is too much, between the humid air laden with her pheromones and the scent of their sex, he's overwhelmed. Near bursting and a little ashamed, what would she think if she knew what he was contemplating when she was just trying to rest.

Rocking back on his heels he fortifies himself with a deep breath. He manages to tuck her back in before he removes himself from the nest and flees. Except he doesn't flee, not exactly. Despite how shook he is he takes his time. Hangs the damp towel on the back of the wooden chair. Pulls on his shirt, vest, boots and belt. Sets a water bottle and Beth's knife on the floor within reach of the nest. Closes the curtains over the big window and then grabs his crossbow, before quietly shutting the door.

He makes a quick check of the main floor. Straining his eyes against the shadows darkening the corners of the rooms. Peers out the windows beside the blocked front door, sees that the rural, tree lined street is still empty, before heading out the back door. Needs to get some air.

To think. Daryl walks a slow perimeter around the graveyard onto the front lawn and down to the road then around the far side of the building sticking close to the dense trees. He keeps his steps soft, listening to the world around him as much as looking. When he makes it back to where he started he sits on the steps and fishes a loose smoke out of his vest pocket, doesn't light it right away. It's the only cigarette he has.

The back steps on the funeral home face north west and give him a view of the sunset. The tops of the trees looking like they're about to catch fire. He watches the sun's slow progression downward as a deep blue claims more and more of the sky. As he does he tries to unpack all of the jumbled thoughts fighting for his attention. Knows he needs to get his head on right before he heads back in, to her.

Was it only a few hours ago he was thinking on how this experience would change her? As though he would be some passive observer. That couldn't be further from the reality of the situation. Now he's struggling to imagine just how fully he might be changed by the end of this. It feels like she has a gravitational pull on him. If he looks back on the last few weeks, he can see that it's been this way since they got out of the prison together. The longer they've been alone together the stronger it's gotten, slowly dragging him in closer and closer to her, and now he can feel its pull in every fiber of his being.

There is still a small part of him, that angry scared part, that wants to lash out. To demand she explain the point of doing all of this. A much bigger part of his mind knows the girl didn't choose this consciously, and she certainly isn't doing it to hurt him or anyone else. He knows this is her body trying to secure whatever she needs for her best possible future. If he thinks logically he suspects it means something deep inside her sees potential in their partnership and wanted to secure and solidify it. Isn't that idea a bit of a mind fuck, that on some instinctual level she sees potential in them, together. A future, for the both of them. That he truly didn't run her off with all his asshole outbursts and mean hurtful words.

He has been holding the smoke unlit between his lips. He'd found it abandoned in the medicine cabinet above a destroyed sink in the shine shack the night before. Blessedly unharmed and mold free. He'd been saving it for the perfect moment. Now, he pulls lighter from his pants pocket and sparks it, catching the tip of his cigarette as the very last of the sunset fades away to true twilight. The large moon is already up. Hovering above the building and casting bright light and those eerie almost blue shadows you get when the moon is almost full. The smoke burns and he holds in a small cough. He feels a tingly rush through him as the nicotine hits his blood stream. It's been too long. Hasn't had anything save the 2 pieces of nicorette gum Beth had scavenged from a rusted out Ford hatchback a week or more ago. Yet, not even the head rush from his smoke is enough to keep Daryl's thoughts away from the omega waiting upstairs.

There is so much about this that is not he like he assumed it would be. Nothing is how it seemed in movies or when Merle had been boasting and telling knotting tales. She's not mindless, she's not crazed. She may have literally begged him for it, but that was just between the two of them. Daryl doesn't believe it's the same sort of thing as the stuff Merle would joke about. Daryl doesn't think her heat is overwhelming or drowning out her reason. Though it is definitely impacting them, motivating them. She still talks and thinks like she always has. Now she just needed a knot, and to rest. He still feels like himself but this is

obviously impacting him because he's never had it in his head to take care of someone like this before. He's certainly never wanted to fuck anyone so profoundly, like it's more than a urge, as if it were just as necessary as breathing. Like being inside her is his natural state and he's been deprived his entire fucking life. He wonders if this what people mean when they talk about compatible partners? Is this why the pheromones she keeps pumping out seem to practically punch him the guts?

He knows what they have just done had been vastly different than any of the sex he has previously engaged in. He hadn't been just just scratching an itch, or getting Merle to stop running his mouth. It wasn't something he was just trying to hurry through and get over with. Wasn't something he thought he should do then wished was over as soon as it started. He enjoyed it, every moment. This is not his normal, where he blows a knot and is good for months and months, he still wants her. Somehow, he wants her more now than before they fucked.

The other thing that really stands out to him, part of his reaction that is truly deviating from the norm, is how, even now, he's enjoying thinking about it. He's reveling in going over every little detail. Not pushing it from his mind and trying to forget it happened. Doesn't think he'll ever be able to forget this. Can't imagine why he would want to.

His smoke is burnt down all the way to the filter by the time he stubs it out against the wooden stairs. He sits completely still in the silence for a moment. Then he gives into the creeping feeling he's been gone too long. Allows himself to be drawn back to their den; finds the room mostly dark, lit only by the bright moon light, and her exactly as he left her. Fast asleep and shrouded in their nest. He removes his vest, boots, pants and belt, wanting to ensure her comfort, before crawling under the blankets and curling himself around her. Hopeful he can catch a few hours of sleep.

When he wakes he finds he has not moved at all. Around the edges of the thin curtains covering the large window he can see the sky just starting to lighten. He is surprised to discover he slept soundly the whole night. As he gently stretches his limbs he realizes just how badly they both needed to stop and truly rest. They had been running on empty, likely to get hurt or make some stupid mistake because they were so worn down. He also thinks that no matter what they needed there is no way they would be stopped and resting like this if not for Beth's heat. He would have pushed them to keep moving.

He pulls himself from the warm cozy nest and dresses, even pulling on his boots. The house has gotten chilly, the temperature's starting to drop over night despite the hot afternoons. He hits the bathroom and then walks the perimeter. Everything is still and they are truly alone. As if they might be the only two people left in the world. When he returns to the house Daryl stands in the kitchen pulling food out of the cupboards. He eats a granola bar and a stale pop tart before gathering up an arm full of breakfast options and bringing them all upstairs intent on feeding her.

She's not sure if it's the light creeping past the curtains or the sound of him bumping against

the door that wakes her. She is sitting up, clutching a blanket to her chest, taking stock of her surroundings as he tries to get the door shut with his arms full of food. Like actually overflowing with food. She can see pop tarts and granola bars, and fruit cups, crackers, jam. It's a freaking feast. Held against his broad chest by his wide palms and long fingers.

As she is trying to wrap her mind around the feeling of hunger and arousal the sight of Daryl and his bounty has so instantly stirred in her. She notices that her body feels amazing. Relaxed and rested. Warm but without the tension and anxiety from yesterday. Daryl looks up from getting the door closed and his face sort of cycles through expressions, she can't figure out exactly what he is thinking but gets the distinct impression he looks like he got caught. Even from across the room she can pick up his pheromones changing from excited to concerned. Like she is gonna make fun of him for bringing her food. An alert is screeching in her brain, one wrong step and this could go from awkward to catastrophic. She realizes Daryl is nervous, unsure of how to proceed.

Her hindbrain purrs at her to sooth him. To ease his worry about the whole situation. Assure him she liked it, that she's happy and content. That he did good. In an instant she knows what to do. It's not something she would have done in her old life. She would have been shy and hiding herself away in the light of day. Instead she does exactly what she did yesterday and leans into these urges her hindbrain is throwing up. She lowers her blanket, letting it pool around her waist, her breasts fully exposed in the golden light just starting to push into the room. Tilts her head and smiles as she pretends to take stock of his haul.

She is aiming for playful, eyebrow quirked, when she speaks, "You think that's enough to keep us going? I feel like we got a lot of exercise."

She smiles and doesn't hesitate to bat her eyelashes a little at him. Actively trying to conjure up her own sweet and reassuring pheromones. She's has completely put herself out there. He's shifting his weight between his feet, fidgeting as much as he can with his load. His eyes skating over everything in the room landing for the briefest moment before flying on. She needs him to acknowledge her, or, even better, relax and look at her for more than 2 seconds.

One beat, two, then his whole body seems to unclench. He moves to the high dresser, depositing the food on it. Wipes his palms down the front of his pants before he turns to face to her. His eyes move straight to her breasts. She can't help but focus on how his adam's apple bobs and his tongue darts out to wet his lips. He takes a deep breath and hauls his eyes up to her face before he speaks.

"oh, I think ya'll be alright. Slept like the dead for goin' on 15 hours." His voice is flat but he's smirking, making it clear he's making fun.

She smiles back, because she just can't help it, so big it hurts her cheeks. Then her tummy growls, loud as any walker. Reaching out she makes grabby hands towards the food. Instead of passing her something he comes over to her. Bending down and scooping her into his arms as she yelps. The blanket is left on the nest and he cradles her naked body tight against his clothed one.

He deposits her on the simple wooden chair next to the dresser, then turns to dig through his

pack. She inhales sharply as her ass, thighs and feet touch the chilly surfaces. He turns back instantly, his face concerned. His pheromones flaring up once again.

“Is cold.” She murmurs as her body involuntarily folds in on itself.

She smiles sheepishly and shrugs at him. He snorts, and goes back to digging in his pack. A few seconds later he turns back to her. Bringing his flannel that has the arms still attached around her shoulders. He helps her arms through then buttons two buttons in the middle of the chest. His fingers, brush against her nipples, it’s like her entire body feels it, but he’s gone almost instantly. She suppresses her urge to rub into him like a needy barn cat, instead smiling and reaching her arms up to him. He doesn’t disappoint. Picking her up again, her arms around his neck, bare bottom and thighs pressed hotly against one forearm, knees curled around the other.

He steps to the window. Leaning forward in his arms she reaches out and pulls back the tan curtains. They both gaze out, taking in the quiet tree lined road. The sky a rapidly lightening blue with bright tendrils of orange and red sunlight light starting to peek through the leaves and crack above the tree line. She can’t look away, it’s so beautiful. She can feel Daryl’s gaze on the side of her face. He makes no move to leave, instead popping his hip out and leaning against the window frame. Hoisting her a little higher in his arms.

She doesn’t know she’s crying until his rough thumb wipes at her cheek.

"I'm not sad." She rushes to assure him, but even as she speaks her voice cracks with emotion.

She feels like she owes him an explanation, even if she’s not 100% sure what it is she’s feeling. So she tries. She takes a few seconds and dissects what it is about this moment that pulls at her heart. Then she turns her gaze from the sunset to his face.

"I'm so happy. I really am. I just think it’s been a really really long time since I felt safe enough to just look at something beautiful... Not sure I thought I’d ever get that again... Thank you, Daryl.”

He doesn’t say anything. Tucks his face into her hair, arms holding her close. His large body so steady and firm around her. Everything combining to leave her feeling completely safe and secure. Some tension, she wasn't even conscious she was carrying around, coiled deep within her, loosening and ebbing away in the soft light and his tight embrace. He stays there, constant and reliable, holding her in the rising sunlight until the it has cleared the tops of the trees the bright colors of sunrise fading away.

Daryl shifts her weight in his grasp, standing away from the window frame and moving towards the door. He carries her down the hall and into the bathroom. There is no hesitation as he strides into the narrow room holding her. He lifts the lid on the toilet, before depositing her on the seat and turning but, much to her embarrassment, not leaving. He stands facing away from her, hip propped against the vanity, almost in the doorway, waiting.

She huffs out a annoyed breath, the sharp smell of old urine reaching her nose on her inhale,

but doesn't protest. On some level she understands his need to hover, knows it's instinctual. Knows it's just a response to her whole situation. She can't really blame him. And maybe, supplies that part of her brain that is getting louder and harder to ignore, maybe she doesn't really mind it. Maybe she likes the idea that he won't leave her, not even for her to use the bathroom.

It's only when she goes to use the toilet paper that is still in the holder on the wall that she realizes how clean she is. She remembers what they did. How wet she was. She did not imagine how sticky and damp she felt sitting in his lap after. So she thinks it over and comes to the only logical conclusion. Daryl washed her. If she thought she might like the idea of him standing guard while she pees this gets her blood strumming, and makes her skin undeniably tingly. she needs a few deep breaths to get herself back under control. When she does close the lid on the toilet Daryl wastes no time in scooping her up and heading back to the den.

They are about half way down the hall when she finds her voice.

"Ya've taken such good care of me." Her eyes are fixed on his profile, neck bent a ways back.

He scoffs, but she can see the smile tugging at his lips, tops of his ears turning a little red.

"Told ya, I got ya. Whatever you need. Anything." The stress he puts on the last word, Beth feels it deep in her chest; an echo of his actual voice inside her.

He shoulders the door open and drops her gently into the nest. He brings the entire pile of food over and lays it out in front of her crossed legs. Then he picks up a full water bottle from the floor beside the nest and hands it to her. She cracks the water and starts drinking, almost finishing the entire thing once she gets going. As she is drinking he goes and rummages through her pack. She is about to ask him what he is looking for when he turns back around holding the faded plastic comb she had picked up from an abandoned mini van a few weeks back.

"Git eating, ya need it." He gestures to the spread in front of her as he toes off his boots.

He slips the comb into his back pocket and pulls off his vest and flannel, tossing them onto the chair. He undoes his belt, but doesn't pull it from the loops. Instead, he pops the comb between his teeth like a pirate with a knife and pulls his pants off, leaving him in a pair of boxers that were once a green plaid but now are more a sad grey. Honestly, she doesn't know how he can look so good in worn out boxers and dirty socks, but the sight of him makes her breath catch. Somehow, he even looks attractive as he hops a little removing the socks and finally his boxers adding them to his pile of clothes.

This time she doesn't hesitate to stare. Eyes locked on his bobbing erection as he seems to prowl towards her. She is still watching him, and very much not eating, as he climbs into the nest. He settles back against the wall behind her, his legs spread on either side of her hips. He gathers her tangled hair in one hand and pulls it back over her shoulder.

"Eat." He jabs in the comb into her spine before he starts working on the worst knots with his fingers.

Somehow she manages to pull her attention away from his naked form and back to the food in front of her. First she opens a fruit cup, cracks the seal and lets the sweet syrup flood past her lips. Then uses her fingers to hook the little chunks of fruit into her mouth. It's gone too soon and she cracks another, then a granola bar. Daryl moves onto using the comb, slowly working through each section of her hair. He's so gentle it hardly pulls, just steadily working away as she eats. She breaks a raspberry pop tart into bite size pieces, popping them into her mouth one at a time. Then she spots a bag of trail mix with dried mango and almonds and little chocolate chips. It's so good. Sweet and salty, crunchy but not stale. She moans, licking the salt residue from her fingers.

"Daryl, there's chocolate and it's so good."

She twists around and feeds him one single chocolate chip. His teeth nip at her fingertips.

"Is good." His agreement ghosts quietly across the back of her neck.

The most severe tangles are out of her hair now. Daryl is able to run his fingers through unimpeded. She hasn't felt this clean, this human, since before the prison fell. All of these beautiful little things, these simple pleasures, remind Beth that it's all worth it. Despite the softness of the moment she feels a determination settling like steel into her bones. The world is worth surviving and she is never going to forget that again. She will do whatever it takes to keep living, even if it is just so she can remember this. That is was real, and she got have something so good.

She's not sure when he decides to braid it. Just realizes that sometime ,while she was having her epiphone, the motion of his fingers had become repetitive instead of random. He starts with a small braid, at her right temple. Then he shifts to the other side, bringing all her hair forward over left shoulder. He's leaning around, partially in front of her now and she watches as he bites his lip between his teeth, deeply concentrating on his work. She watches him loop her stretched black elastic around the end of the braid then he sits back, leaning against the wall, meeting her gaze and smiling shyly at her.

She runs her fingers along his work. The tiny braid at her right temple is tight catching most of her baby hairs and working along her hairline down to the base of her neck. There it is drawn into Daryl's second looser braid, all of her hair loosely bound together to fall forward over her left shoulder. She doesn't need a mirror to know they are the best braids she's ever worn. She can feel Daryl watching her. Herself blushing brighter and warmer all over.

"Thank ya. Where'd you learn to braid?" She's curious, doesn't think he's done much hair braiding before, but he's good at it.

"Didn't. Figured it's just like working with rope."

She can't help but smile as she tells him, "Feels nice."

Beth has slowed down dramatically but is still picking at the food spread out in front of her. She keeps twisting around, trying to feed little bits to Daryl. He accepts the offered food every so often but most morsels get redirected to her own mouth. Like he's worried she'll starve when they have more food in front of them than they have even seen in the last two weeks combined.

She suspects his need to provide and protect flaring up so dramatically is a symptom of his alpha designation. She can't know he's in a rut, but she's nearly certain. Daryl hasn't said anything but he's so focused and intense. Even for Daryl. Also, he has never produced pheromones like this in all the years she's known him, the room is full of him. Like he honestly isn't aware he's doing it. Beth is slightly taken aback by how much she likes the idea that she could be responsible for his falling into rut. That his natural response to her heat is this primal instinct pointed directly back at her. Both of them venturing into this new uncharted territory together. Ones pheromones sustaining the state of the other like some sort of nervous system feedback loop. As if they could just opt out of the rest of the world and stay here, exactly like this forever. She's not going to say any of that to him though. She's not stupid.

She wants to tell him how much she likes him taking care of her, but she's scared even that could frighten him away. So she says nothing and just tries to show him. Leans her weight back into him, breathing deep, sucking in the thick scent of his protective pheromones, as his hands move from touching her hair to kneading at her shoulders.

"How ya feeling today?" His voice is muffled, his face pressed loosely into the back of her neck. His facial hair scraping lightly against her skin.

"Pretty similar to yesterday. Warm, but not scared this time. I'm not anxious. I think, today I'm feeling excited." She explains quietly as she runs her fingertips along his bare shin bones, where they bracket her own legs.

Honestly, Beth is shocked she managed to get such suggestive words out without stumbling. Maybe she is changing.

He groans, "Ya smell excited." His voice rough.

His fingers grasping at her hips and pulling her bum back to press into his crotch. She can feel him hard and she squirms. He reaches around her, unbuttoning his flannel and then pulling it down her arms and tossing it to the side. Rough hands palm at her breasts for a minute and then return to grasp at her hips, but he doesn't advance more than that. Keeps rubbing at her bare hips and telling her to eat. She keeps trying to feed him.

He finally tells her, "Maybe food ain't what I'm hungry for, Girl."

She twists again, her expression questioning, feeling like she is missing something. His laugh is sharp and loud in the quiet room. Strong arms wrap around her shoulders and he pulls her back, fully onto his lap.

His nose pushes at her ear and he whispers, "Bet you taste like a fucking peach."

"Oh." She is barely able to choke the word out, overpowered by the feeling of an intense blush spreading across her skin and scorching.

When her brain catches up, stops stumbling over what he is implying she doesn't hesitate. Scrambling to turn in his lap. Their teeth crack against each other a few times before she is able to get her mouth properly fused to his. One of his hands grasps more firmly at her hips, pulling her down against his erection. The other reaching behind her to push the remaining food off the nest and onto the floor. Her kisses are desperate, her fingers pulling at his hair, her hips grinding. She pulls her mouth away gasping for breath.

"Daryl, please."

She doesn't even know exactly what she's asking for but her requests seem to flip a switch in him. Her back hits the mattress with enough force to knock the breath out of her. He's over her, his body pushing down heavily into her own. His mouth sucking bruises along her collar bone. She whines, desperate and needy, her hips bucking up into the weight of him. His palms smooth down her sides. They push against her thighs, spreading them further and making room for his broad shoulders. He doesn't hesitate to sink down into the space he has made.

She's staring down at him when he looks up and locks eyes with her. She's drowning in him. His heavy gaze and scent, needy and hungry, all around her. Her clit is throbbing, she raises her hips, pushing her pussy against his chest. Her arousal smearing a slick trail across his coarse chest hair. The pressure is wonderful and woefully lacking at the same time. Doesn't even try to stop herself from whining, so guttural, desperate for him to do something to her.

He's still, just staring at her, when a string of his drool lands hotly on her pubic bone. All of a sudden she's certain she has never been this warm in her entire life. She's pouring sweat, and dripping slick. Already too far gone to be self conscious. She finally finds her voice, a scratchy whisper. Pushing out that one word that always seems to move him, softly over and over.

" Please. Please. Please..."

He's not still anymore. He grabs her wrists. Pulling them down and guiding her hands so she's holding herself wide open for him. One of his heavy arms he slings across her hips. The other rubbing at her pussy. He works his fingers inside of her, pushing down across her hips when she starts to squirm. His head is tilted to the side as he examines her up close. Watching the motion of his fingers and inhaling deeply before diving in.

His mouth is all over her and she feels so full. He's inside her, pushing up with his fingertips. Meeting the pressure of his palm pushing down between her hip bones from above. Working to build something deep inside her. A wave of pressure and pleasure advancing again and again. He sucks her clit into his mouth, pushing her into one small orgasm building into another after another after another. She struggles to catch her breath, panting heavily. He doesn't let up. Working her over again and again. One of her heels digs into the mattress. The other slung over his shoulder. He gets her so worked up she's lifting

her hips off the bed, grinding herself against his face.

There is not one drop of shame left inside her. She's too aware of how he's thrusting himself against the nest. Of the pleased noises he's making, muffled by her flesh. Just when her desperation reaches fever pitch, the point where she is certain she's going to simply burst apart into a million tiny pieces, he moves abruptly up her body.

His erection slides into her with no resistance, slick dripping out around him. He doesn't thrust, just pushes as far into her as he can. Grasping onto the tops of her shoulders, as if he were trying to climb her. Burying his face into the curve of her neck. His knot bursting out as soon as he enters her. Stretching her as he slides directly into her lock. This time her orgasm is sustained, more intense than anything she has ever felt before. It breaks her apart, her body convulsing and shuddering under him as he sinks impossibly deep inside her.

When she finally returns to herself she sobs. Gasping for breath as tears pour down her face and soak into her hair. Overwhelmed and awed by her body's response to him. Daryl pets at her hair and licks gently at her pulse point. Soothing and reassuring above her as their nest cradles her below. Before long she feels herself relaxing completely beneath him. Every drop of tension within her released. Everything becoming so incredibly soft and tender as warm sunlight slowly floods their den.

Chapter End Notes

A few years ago I moved somewhere with the most amazing sunrises and sunsets. It never gets old. I honestly believe they can be deeply spiritual moments.

Chapter 6: VI

Chapter Notes

A massive thank you to nessie6400 for leaving a comment a few weeks ago that kicked my creative block in the ass. I never meant to leave it this long but had been struggling to write anything for months. This serving of fluff and smut is for you, Dclements01 and anyone else who has ever been kind enough to leave a comment asking for more.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

It's a little surprising just how easily Daryl falls into this new routine. Knot, sleep, eat, basic hygiene, lots of rest and a couple of patrols scattered throughout the day. Nothing in him offering resistance, moving easily from one task onto the next. For once he's not restless, or jittery; not biting his nails or pacing. Feeling more rested than he has in years.

It's a fucking vacation. First one he's ever had.

It's not just that it's a break from their everyday grind for survival, it's that the time is enjoyable. Daryl's actually happy holed up here, with her. He's happy because of her. Even when they're not rubbing up on each other she's always being sweet to him, fluffing his pillow, tucking blankets around and cuddling into him. She rubs his back, or sings, or somehow coaxes him into playing a card game. Friendly and comforting and an honest to god pleasure to be around.

He's actively trying not to over think things. It's all almost too much; what being here, like this, does to him. How it makes him feel. He doesn't want to spend this time worrying, wants to let himself enjoy this. After a life time of bad luck, shitty circumstances, and pain something this good is wholly unexpected. Daryl doesn't know if he's ever done anything to deserve this with her, but if he learned anything from his time at the prison it's that he can try. That maybe, if he gives it his all, he could be good enough for her.

He keeps expecting her to be overwhelmed, demanding and cranky. Like she was at the country club, but she's not. She's sweet and patient, and when she does ask him for anything they are already deep in it. He's always so far gone he can hardly appreciate it. Too busy falling over himself, trying to give her what she wants, to enjoy seeing her display the traits of her designation.

However, he can tease her, later, when he's back to himself. When he does she flushes this beautiful, bright shade of crimson and kind of folds in half. All at once she's trying to hush him and sounding panicked but also choking on her laughter.

"We can't talk about it Daryl!" Her voice is a whisper scream, while her hands flutter around.

"Ya didn't have no problem talking about it before," His voice gets high pitched and breathy a bad impression of her, "Pllllleeeaaassee, fill m..."

"DARYL!" Her voice is sharp as she interrupts her eyes getting even bigger as she stares.

"Well, you said..." He keeps picking at her.

"Daryl, no! We can do it and we can enjoy it, but we ain't talking about it now!" She's laughing but also covering her face, flushed and embarrassed.

"What's the difference?" He questions, leaning over her shoulder, rubbing his stubble against the crook of her neck and digging his fingers into her side.

She shrieks with laughter, wriggling against him.

The drive to protect her is ever present, seeping into everything he does. What surprises him is how understanding Beth is about it. How easily she lets him play her guard dog.

Daryl had been telling her about the basement when she'd said she wanted to explore a bit. At first he'd offered to bring her down. Had mentioned a storage room he found under the stairs in the basement. He had told her it was packed full of boxes they could go through. But when she makes to get ready he gets all twitchy thinking about her leaving their den.

He paces in front of the door for a minute while Beth starts to pull on clothes. He grits his teeth, no idea how he's going to explain his change of heart. Daryl knows he's grimacing when he shakes his head at her.

"Nah ya staying here." He announces harshly.

Her movements freeze and she peers at him through her hair, seeming to size him up.

"Okay." She agrees softly.

Then she's slipping her jeans off and crawling back into their nest. Seemingly unbothered, unsurprised. Beth just cuddles in, smiles that bright smile and sends him off sweetly wishing him luck.

He works quickly, not wanting to be gone long. Not wanting her to have to be alone. Same as every other time he's left her here. He's returned with food, and then with more blankets, and then some water, and then again with an arm full of books and a deck of Uno cards. Daryl keeps coming back. He'll find something and then comes right back, a part of the routine. She welcomes him every time he returns to their den, hugging him tight and then leading him to the comfort of their nest. He thinks it might be what coming home is supposed to feel like.

"What did ya find?" Beth's always happy, but this time she's visibly excited.

Bouncing on her toes, leaning to the side and trying to peer around him. She can tell he's trying to hide something big and bulky behind his back. He pulls out a small guitar case and

shoves it at her.

A mumbled, "Found this for ya", is all the explanation he offers her.

Ever since they've been here Daryl has noticed she's been singing and humming. Just to herself in quiet moments. Like she's been so relaxed she didn't know she was doing it. And when he saw the guitar he knew it was meant for her.

Daryl's not sure if it's technically a guitar or if it's something else because it seems smaller. It had been tucked behind the stacks of boxes in the storage room with a bunch of old funeral supplies. There were broken folding chairs, faded cloth back drops, half burnt candles, vases, empty picture frames, microphones with tangled cables and this little guitar in a hard case.

Beth has set the case down on the floor and is kneeling in front of it, bare toes peaking out under the curve of her ass. Still totally nude. Her eyes are glassy, she keeps reaching out and then pulling her hand back. Almost like she is afraid to open it. He watches her indecision while he strips back down. When she still hasn't opened the damn thing he stretches out and taps her hip with his foot.

"Go on, already." Daryl instructs her.

It's dusty, covered in scratches, and there is something sticky on the strap. From the look of wonder on her face he would think she was looking at a case full of gold bars, or maybe bullets. She tells him it's a guitar, just a smaller size, some parlour style or something. She tells him it fits her better than a full size, that it's perfect.

She's leaned back against the pile of cushions, not really paying attention as she flips through a book in the warm afternoon sun. Daryl is on his stomach, head resting on her thighs, lazily looking over a local map. They don't have on any clothes, never do in the nest. She discards the book and without thinking her hand finds his shoulders, stroking against his skin. Her fingertips almost instantly finding a raised scar. She feels him tense under her. She stills and when he doesn't push her away she hums soothingly and keeps stroking. It feels like he is granting her permission.

This time she doesn't try avoid his scars at all. Instead she lets her slender fingers lightly track along the more obvious lines and ridges. Over the tops of his shoulders, across his back, down to the small of his back. Beth tries to keep her touches steady and unfaltering while keeping them as delicate and gentle as she can.

Daryl makes a strangled noise. Pushing his face down hard into her lap. His breath becoming little gasps. She just keeps trying to be calm and soothing. So similar to how her Daddy had taught her to approach a wounded or frightened animal.

She can feel his tears on her thigh, but she doesn't call attention to it. Just keeps on moving her fingers across his skin in steady strokes. Eventually she feels him relax, almost melt

against her. His breath is still ragged, but under control. She is surprised when he speaks. Already assuming it was just one of those things they wouldn't talk about.

"No one's ever touched me like that." She hears something in his voice, a sort of reverence, as though he thinks this is somehow more intimate than knotting her.

"Ya deserve soft touches, Daryl," She wants to tell him he deserves everything; he's so good, always giving everything he has for their well being.

"Never would have wanted it." He shrugs against her legs as he speaks.

"Ya want me to stop?" her hand stills.

He turns his head against her thigh and finally looks up at her, with wet eyes.

"Nah, I don't want ya to stop. Is real nice." His words pushing warm breath across her thigh.

He relaxes back into her lap. The tension slowly bleeding out from his shoulders as the gentle strokes of her fingers to pull him into a deep sleep.

They're fucking when She asks to see it. He's braced on his arms above her, gaze roaming over her face and her tits. His thighs burning as he pumps into her tight, wet, heat. Her knees are hooked up around his forearms, keeping her wide open. He's so intent on his task that it takes a few seconds for him to understand what she's said.

"Daryl, can I see your knot?" She's breathless.

He loses his rhythm. Jerking unsteadily for a second.

"What?" He doesn't get what she's asking for.

"I'll make it feel good. I just wanna see." She's staring up at him, running her finger tips along his jaw, voice soft like she thinks he'll spook.

Hell, maybe he is spooked. He feels frozen. Like his brain is shorting out as it tries to fully process what she's asking.

She's talking as if she's trying to coax him into doing something he won't like, "Please."

In that moment he is certain that god damned word is going to be the death of him.

"What d'ya need?" He needs her to be clear.

She pushes against his shoulder and he moves back and off her right away. Dropping back onto his ass. She sinks down between his spread knees. Rubbing those perky little tits against his cock. Smearing her own slick all over her pale skin. She looks excited; all smiles and bright eyes and licking at her plump pink lips.

Then her mouth is on him, even wetter and hotter than her cunt had been. Enthusiastic is the word that comes to the front of his mind. She's humming and drooling, cupping his balls while she works up and down his shaft. His hips start rolling, he can't stay still. Pushing up into her face while his hands tangle in her hair pulling her down onto him.

He's down her throat when his knot starts to swell. She pulls back. Licking and kissing and rubbing it against her spit covered face. Murmuring about how good he is, how thick and beautiful his knot is. He couldn't pull her off him if he tried.

He can't believe this is happening. Can't fucking move. This wouldn't even happen in one of the rutting videos Merle used to watch because it's too intimate. Like a form of worship. The whole thing is other worldly, almost sacred.

He cums so hard he can't catch his breath. His knot impossibly swollen as he watches his cum spurt across her face and into her open mouth. Leaning back, he can see ribbons of it in her hair, dripping from her nose, coating the hands she uses to cradle his knot. Looks like she's been anointed.

Daryl has never come like that in his entire life. It's all encompassing, his entire being teased to the point of breaking and then fully released. He feels wrung out. Too full of feelings and too exhausted to keep them back. He rubs at the wetness on his cheeks with the back of his hand. He thinks he might understand why Beth is always crying after they knot.

This woman looks entirely fucking pleased with herself as she cradles him in her palm, rubbing him against her cum soaked face. She keeps holding him, soothing him for several minutes until his knot mostly eases. Till the feeling starts to return to his fingers and his breathing slows.

Daryl is equal parts mesmerized and horrified. It's obscene; seems like her skin may actually smell like him for the rest of her life. He couldn't have imagined this in his wildest dreams. Somehow she manages to be both perfectly pure and uninhibited at the same time.

She's ruthless. Does not hesitate to absolutely destroy him at every game they play. Laying a pick up 4 when he already has 13 cards clutched in his hand. Giggling a few turns later when she lays down her second to last card with a snap and announces "Uno."

Beth doesn't hesitate to add insult to injury. Woman is delighted after she wins, wiggling in her seat. Doing a little dance and singing about being the best of the best. Insisting he pass her little note book over so she can keep track of their ongoing competition.

"Daryl, what's even the point of playing if we don't know who's winning?" She demands.

He only grunts in response.

"Scared of what ya going to find out?" She's more competitive than he could have imagined.

"Whatever, ya full of it. It's a game of chance. Ya got luck. Not skill." He tries to sound stern, doesn't think he manages, not when he can feel the smile pulling at his cheeks.

"Sounds like something you would say when you's losing 9 games to my 28. Twenty. Eight." She pokes him in the chest twice, emphasizing the numbers.

His heart stutters at the sight of her so animated and excited. Disheveled hair, blankets pooled around her waist, nipples tight in the cool air. Golden and radiant in the darkness, just like the bright cluster of candles burning on the dresser. The picture she makes hits him like a fucking anvil to the chest. He's the luckiest son of a bitch, to be here, in her light.

Beth's sitting cross legged, leaning against a pile of cushions, guitar in her lap. She picks at the strings quietly for a while. Turning the little keys on the top, trying to tune it. She strums a few notes, little snippets not full songs. Only starts to play an actual song after he's finished the granola bar he's eating and is back in the nest; stretched out beside her, flat on his back, novel in hand.

She picks at the guitar strings quietly, but her voice is strong and steady. Daryl stops reading, book spread open over his chest, gives her his undivided attention. He doesn't recognize the song she sings, but he likes it. Likes that she picked it. Likes that she's singing with a big smile and a haunting voice. He likes that she's getting just a little too loud in the quiet room as she sings the chorus. Not that he would dare to complain.

"Leave your boots by the bed
We ain't leaving this room
Till someone needs medical help
Or the magnolias bloom
It's cold in this house and I ain't going out to chop wood
So cover me up and know you're enough
To use me for good
Cover me up and know you're enough
To use me for good"

She looks up, knowing he's been listening; eye's shy, questioning. He pushes the book off his chest letting it fall to the side, and asks her to keep playing.

Daryl feels like he's finally getting a chance to take care of her. She's visibly exhausted, yawning and rubbing at her eyes. Of course she's fighting it, might be the most stubborn woman he's ever met. Shaking her head and opening her eyes wide every time she starts to drift.

So he puts out all the candles but one, then brushes out her hair and rubs the muscles in her shoulders and back. Gets her reclined, nestled back in a pile of soft fabric and now they are making out a little. She's smiling and laughing as he gets her cuddled into the blankets but can barely keep her eyes open. He starts backing off, kisses getting gentler.

Daryl is sure she's about to fall asleep. Daryl is wrong. She starts getting mouthy. Pushing her body against his.

"Why ya stopping?" Beth's voice is quiet but whiny.

"Is bedtime." He keeps his voice low, thinking he can push her back towards sleep.

Beth, clearly, has other plans. Her small, warm hands roaming down his chest. Wiggling her little body against him until her leg gets free of the blankets and she hitches it up over his hip. All done in agonizingly slow and soft movements. Because she is sleepy, but also horny and apparently devious.

"Sleep better if ya make me feel good." Beth's letting her voice get all breathy and slowly batting her eyelashes.

"Ain't ya ready to drop?" He knows she needs the rest, he's being responsible for her.

"Please, won't you make me feel good?" She's snuggling against his chest pleading just a bit.

She's talking like she wasn't yawning into his kisses moments ago. Daryl knows he won't be able to resist her. Not if she really wants it. Not sure he wants to. Just wants to be good for her. A good man, a strong Alpha.

He reaches down, pushing the blankets aside and cupping her. He starts kissing her again and then working his fingers into her. She makes these cute little hurt noises when she cums. She's barely awake now. Looks blissed out and comfortable. Again he tries to ease her to sleep. Slowly removing his hand from between her clenched thighs and tucking her under his arm. Nosing at her hair line as he tries to get them more reclined and covered.

When he pulls the blankets up she whines. Seeing how she is right on the verge of sleep he shushes her. It does not have the desired impact on her.

"Daryl? Why don't ya wanna?" This time she sounds down right petulant.

"Christ." He groans in response.

"Why not?" Somehow she sounds so sleepy and demanding at the same time, "Don't ya want me?"

Even in her exhausted state she manages to rub against him like it's her fucking job. She starts nibbling at his pulse point and he feels the last of his resolve crumbling.

He mumbles into the top of her head, "Always wanna fuck ya."

"Then why ain't ya?"

It's clear what she wants so he pushes his hips back against her. Relishing the pressure as he rubs himself into her side.

"You're exhausted. I'm taking care ya. Letting ya rest." He tries to explain.

"But, Daryl, that's not what I want." She's fucking unrelenting.

"Jesus. What ya want?" Now he's just encouraging her.

"I want ya to knot me to sleep."

"That is not a thing." He can't help but laugh.

She pouts in response, sticking her lips out and looking sad as she tells him, "Is so. And it's gonna feel so good. It's always good when I fall asleep and you're inside me."

"Fuckin' hell." He rasps, breath caught in his throat.

He kisses her hard. Their teeth bash together. He licks into her mouth, needing to taste her. He rolls over her, pressing his weight down against her. Rutting himself against her thighs. Her legs fall wide open. She's pliant and beyond relaxed, dead weight.

He hovers over her and she's a puddle beneath him. He's a little disturbed by how much he likes it. Daryl wants to think it's because she trusts him this insane amount. Trusts him to take care of her in this vulnerable state. Daryl also can't help but wonder if he should worry that he wants to fuck her even if she's only barely conscious.

He pushes into her and she melds to him. It's so soft and warm, how they move against each other. The pressure building in him at a torturous pace. Slow and gentle like nothing Daryl's ever done before.

His fingers find her clit. Dragging slowly against it until she is clutching around him. He keeps the pressure on her hard pulsing clit. Only letting up once she is thrashing her head and grabbing at his wrist. She's hardly coherent by the time they are actually fused together.

"Best feeling" She mumbles, her smile looks drugged.

He pulls himself up bracing on his forearms above her. Concerned, searching her face, needing some reassurance he didn't push her too far. Her eyes are closed, face soft and relaxed.

"Don't go Daryl. Just stay here with me." Her words slur together, totally fuck drunk.

She pulls at him, urging his weight back down against her. He shushes her. His knot is still pulsing inside her. He's couldn't go anywhere even if he wanted to.

"Nowhere I'd rather be, Sweetheart." He reassures her all the same.

Beth is still deathly embarrassed of how she's acting at least half the time, but it's getting easier. The more she listens to this drive within her the less shame she feels. It's not like some voice telling her what to do. It's feelings, and urges and reactions, and they are intense and difficult to understand.

She'll be with Daryl feeling the warmth building and building inside her. Suddenly she'll be yearning for some specific touch. Fixating on it. Eventually she breaks, pleading with him. Unfailing he delivers. Every time. No matter what she craves.

It makes her feel powerful. That Daryl is consistently responding to her. He makes her feel so good, doesn't hesitate when she has a request and has been producing the most intoxicating pheromones. It's clear he wants her, but at the same time Beth worries she can't know how much of that is him and how much is an unavoidable physiological reaction. Honestly, she's not even sure what the difference would be, but she knows she doesn't want power over Daryl.

She doesn't want to get carried away at his expense. She can't ignore him sitting in their nest looking so shell shocked after their coupling. She feels a little guilty. Worries that maybe she pushed him too hard. That she has used her designation to take advantage.

She feels nervous. Worried about how he'll feel once he realizes she's manipulated him. Shifting her weight wringing her hands. Gathering all her courage to start this conversation.

"I think, maybe... When I ask you to do that stuff." She gestures awkwardly and blushes. "I think you're saying yes because of my heat. Like, maybe, my pheromones have thrown you into a rut."

His head is cocked to the side, listening to her, then he scoffs.

"Ain't no rut, not how they are for me." He sounds wholly untroubled.

"Daryl..." She raises an eyebrow her guilt evaporating as determination settles in its place.

"I tell ya nah, it ain't like this. When I'm in a rut I hunt; can track for days. I get real focused, intense."

She's standing with her hands on her hips, feet spread looking down at him. Feeling like she needs to be ready to dig her heels in and fight. But it's hard to give off an air of intimidation when you don't even have a single stitch of clothing on. She can feel his eyes on her chest and neck, where the skin is littered with all these little love bites he's left.

"Ya been pretty focused." She suggests.

Daryl's gaze moves from her chest and back up to her face. He shrugs, surprisingly not even bothering to argue with her about it. He pushes himself up out of the nest. Now she has to look up at him.

He seems to tense as he speaks, "Ya ain't forcing me to do nothing I don't wanna. Been having fun. Ain't ya been having fun?"

She's nodding, "Ya of course I have!", rushing to reassure him.

He instantly relaxes. He's always so worried she's doing something she doesn't want. Yet, he won't even consider it as a possibility for himself.

"Ya get your way cause you look so fucking happy when you do." He jokes, "Don't hurt none that ya got such perfect little titties." He's openly laughing at her now.

She wants to be annoyed. He's teasing her. It should bother her but what she really needs is to get closer to him. She catches his arm and tugs. He comes willingly, stepping into her space. His hand darting out flicking her the tip of her breast before wrapping his arms around her as she can't help but jump and let out a high pitched yelp.

He wakes up to the sound of her singing. The den is dark, only the pale light of early dawn creeping through the window.

"Someway, baby, it's part of me, apart from me
You're laying waste to Halloween
You fucked it, friend, it's on its head, it struck the street
You're in Milwaukee, off your feet

And at once, I knew
I was not magnificent
Strayed above the highway aisle
Jagged vacance, thick with ice
I could see for miles, miles, miles"

She's barley playing. Just picking at the strings, trying parts over and over as she tries to figure out how it goes. Daryl's surprised to hear the word fuck in her sweet voice. Normally he never hears her use that sort of language.

"Ya never swear?" He's curious, wanting to understand.

She starts a little, head snaps up, eyes wide as ever; unaware he had woken. Blonde locks bounce as she shrugs.

"Not my words. Doesn't seem right to change 'em."

He pulls himself closer. Wiggling down into the blankets, his nose brushing against her shoulder.

"Keep singing, Greene."

Chapter End Notes

Beth sings "Cover Me Up" by Jason Isbell and "Holocene" by Bon Iver.

Chapter 7: VII

Chapter Notes

Turns out it's never too late to update that fic you accidentally abandoned.

He's back downstairs, foraging for something to eat in the kitchen, while he keeps thinking on Beth's theory that he has fallen into rut. His instant reaction had been denial but he hasn't stopped thinking about it. Turning it over and over in his head. He doesn't like to admit it, but he hasn't been himself and there is more to it than the massive uptick in how much he's getting laid.

He's already thought on how he's calmer, finding it easier to stay still, to share close quarters than ever before. Now he's recognizing there are some other behaviours that are pretty suspect. They haven't eaten any meat since they landed here. Daryl hasn't caught anything, not even a squirrel in the yard. While he hasn't been tracking or hunting, his focus has been unusually intense; intense and directed almost solely within their den. Usually Daryl can pride himself on being hyper aware of his surroundings. Right now it feels like everything beyond the walls of their den has all but faded away.

Maybe she did throw him into rut. That would explain why he has no idea what's in any of these cupboards, even though he knows he's already looked. It would explain why he hasn't gathered at least some of this food and water getting it packed and ready to go. Why he hasn't been carefully rationing. Fuck. He hasn't been rationing at all.

Honestly, he's not even sure how long they have been going at it. It's been a few days. Three or four maybe. He isn't certain and on some level it feels like he's always been here in this place with her. Like the prison and how everything fell apart has just faded away.

Daryl's not young, and he knows his own body and exactly what his ruts have always been like, and they have never been like this. This is something new. Daryl is starting to grasp just how compatible he and Beth really are. Why would he be thinking on survival when she was right here, happy to receive his attentions? Except, as the alpha, it's his job to take care of her. She's been wanting his attention, but she needs his protection.

He heads back to the cupboards to try and take stock. Figures this is the first step in getting the situation under control. Starts stacking all the goods on the table. Organizing it by kind. Doesn't take long until the table is full of stacks, and he hasn't even started on the upper cabinets yet.

Daryl's not one to look a gift horse in the mouth, but there is too much food here. It's not right. No one would have left this without a fight. He doesn't get it. This is someone's stuff. It should be someone's spot. This place isn't even a little trashed and had been cleaned

somewhat recently. So many supplies but no personal items. At the prison almost everyone had at least one item of comfort, a reminder or a knickknack, or something pretty. There is nothing like that here. Before it had been a business and a residence, and now it feels like a hotel.

Daryl keeps stacking cans and boxes of granola bars and thinks on it. If this place belongs to someone will they be coming back? Where are they? Who are they? Why did they leave? He doesn't get anywhere. No matter what this place actually is he knows they aren't staying here. He needs to prepare. They need a plan. He can't figure out what happened here, or what this place is supposed to be, but he can't shake the feeling it's too good to be true.

A wave of numbness burns through him, leaving a prickly breathless feeling in it's wake. How could he have been so reckless? So wrapped up in blowing his knot he's ignored the very fundamentals of their survival. He feels sick. Pacing circles around the kitchen table; fingers twitching as he stewes in the shame. Imagining what Merle would say about this.

Pathetic excuse for an alpha.

A little taste of clutch and ya forget how to be a man.

Worse than pussy whipped.

Fucking pitiful.

Woman like that ain't gonna have no trouble finding an alpha to actually step up and take care a her.

The thought of sometime else in his place, taking care of her makes his heart race and his jaw clench. How does he stop that from happening? The voice in his head changes. Sounds a lot more like Rick than his brother. More constructive and less of a dick.

You can do this.

You've done it before, been good for other people. Took care of people.

It's time to step up and take care of your responsibilities.

If you want her to stay alive then you gotta be better, do better.

Eventually his pace around the small kitchen slows. His breathing calms and he relaxes his jaw. He's thinks of her, safe and warm, upstairs and waiting for him. Eventually the anger and shame fades to an ignorable background buzz and a deep determination takes root. He's not going to fuck this up. He's ready to man up, he is going to keep her safe and whole, even if it kills him.

Daryl is off getting some more food. He never hesitates to make sure she has enough, looking after her like it's his job. Beth is using the opportunity to tidy up. Gathering up all the food wrappers that had been in a little pile beside their nest and stuffing them into the bathroom garbage; lining up empty water bottles in a neat row against the wall. There are three of the

bigger gallon water jugs and fourteen of the small individual serving water bottles that are empty. She thinks that seems like a lot. She can't remember opening any of them. She remembers drinking, Daryl insisting she keep drinking, always passing her water. Always taking care of her.

She has no idea how much water they have, what the ration schedule has been. There is still a half full big jug and a half dozen unopened small bottles here in their den. She lines them up neatly right on the edge of their nest. She doesn't know if there's more downstairs, or in the bathroom. Heck, she can't even remember what the outside of the house looks like.

She's been so irresponsible. She hasn't been thinking about survival at all. She hasn't been pulling her weight. Happy to just lump her care onto the list of things Daryl's responsible for, when she knows full well he's already been working so hard to keep her safe. Her job now is to help him, to lift him up, to make things easier. Instead she's made everything infinitely more difficult for him. She cannot allow herself to put her heat ahead of the realities of this world.

Beth shakes off her guilty conscience with a silent pledge that she will do better, starting right now. Her clothes are mixed with some of Daryl's on the chair and scattered across the floor and sticking out of her pack. Not at all ready to move. At the prison she always had a bag packed, even if she didn't get to grab it when they ran. She gathers it all, there isn't much. None of it's clean and most of it's been scavenged from vehicles they dug through. She folds each item neatly, stacking a full outfit for herself on the seat of the chair and then divides the rest up evenly between their two packs. She adds in her notebook, the Uno cards and the hairbrush; leans her guitar in its case against their packs.

Daryl's vest and flannel are hung over the back of the chair. She runs her fingers over the seams in the leather while she thinks. Isn't much else to be done here in their den, now that everything is tidied and put away. Wasn't a lot of work, but it bothers her that she had neglected it. She knows he has everything else totally under control; that they are safe and secure from danger. Beth knows Daryl's beyond competent, she just doesn't want him to feel like it's all up to him. She can't be a burden for him. He deserves a true partner, someone who can support him in kind.

Her finger tips find the edge of the wings on the back of the vest. She wants Daryl to come back. She quiets and strains to listen for him, but can't hear any thing from downstairs. The urge to go find him is so great, but she is going to be strong. She will not allow herself to go following after him getting in his way and making everything he has to take care of more complicated. She can control these feelings.

She slips the leather vest over her shoulders. Pulls it around herself burying her nose in the neckline. Huffing the smell of the worn leather; of stale smoke and sweat and earth. The leather is cool against her warm skin. She's naked, save the vest, been naked for days now, and still always so warm. How many days? She tries to think back on the time but the only thing she can remember is Daryl. His smell and the feel of his hands on her. The way his eyes track her. How, when she's so full and stretched with him, her mind empties and she feels totally free.

It's a little bit paralyzing, how quickly she wants. Her response to even just a thought of him is so raw and instantaneous. It astounds her, how even after days of exposure it continues to ramp up and grow. Always more than before. She wants Daryl more forcefully than she has ever wanted anything. Before she had never even let herself imagine what it might be like, to be with an alpha. There was so much shame around her designation. Being omega is very looked down on in the bible belt. A sure path to sin. Beth knows now that was all hogwash.

No matter what her church used to say there is nothing wrong with her or what her and Daryl do together. Receiving Daryl's knot is incredibly intimate. Even if she gets flustered and embarrassed if she thinks on it too long. It feels so good, being close to Daryl like that, always leaves her full of emotion. The spiritual opposite of the numbness she felt drinking moonshine. She knows everything about the act is special and powerful. If she still believes in God, which she's not at all sure she does, then he's the one that made her like this. Made them fit together like puzzle pieces. Beth sees no sin in that.

It's not just that he gives her so much pleasure. It's the way she feels safe and undeniably whole, despite everything they've endured. It's as though his presence, when he's acting as her alpha, cancels out all the horror. He doesn't even seem to try, making her feel good and secure just comes naturally to him. It's written so plainly in everything he does. He shows himself to be a true provider and protector with every touch and look, with every choice he makes.

Since they've been alone he's been nothing but consistent, and sturdy. Even when his mood was sour and his attitude harsh. He protected her, watched over her. Gave her exactly what she wanted, even when all she wanted was a drink like some brat. Then, when her heat had developed he'd been shockingly content to lavish his attentions on her. There had been no lie when he said it wasn't going to be a hardship. He's been enjoying himself and he hasn't hesitated to let her know. He likes knotting her. Really likes it. In fact he has been shockingly vocal about his thoughts on the matter.

She tries not to let herself get any foolish ideas. Yet she finds it's almost impossible to avoid some dangerous lines of thought. That they belong together. That her reaction is so strong because he's meant to be her alpha. That fate or destiny or some higher power has placed her beside him.

Beth examines her faint reflection in the dark window. Maybe she has changed. A little rougher, a little older, stronger, more experienced. A real omega. Maybe she could be like those omegas she used to hear about on the news and on TV shows with names like 'America's Most Shocking Omega Survival Stories' who lifted cars or survived mortal wounds to protect their pack in threatening situations. Maybe her designation could be a gift in this world and not a burden.

Daryl still isn't back yet. Beth's working to ground herself to the spot, intent on staying put despite her rising need. She worries her fingers across the bottom hem of the vest and then continues across the soft skin of her thighs. Focuses all of her attention on the drag of her finger tips. Brings her left foot up and props it on the seat of the chair, knee bent out to the side. Her eyelids fall closed as her fingers skim closer and closer to her center. Let's her fingers massage at her labia lightly before using two fingers to spread them apart and a third to circle her clit.

She's so slick. It makes her gentle touch feel electric. Her clit growing with each tender swipe. Without thinking about it her hips jerk forward each time her finger skims over her opening. Her eyes open and her gaze is drawn down to where she can see a muted reflection of her hand moving in the dark glass of the window. Her whole body pausing when she first pushes inside, relishing the relief that floods through her. She moves her finger languidly, feels her walls stretching. Those same muscles clenching tightly as she adds a second finger, her body rocking against the motion of her hand.

A warm puff of air floats across her ear, pulling her attention back to the room and away from the sensations washing over her. It takes her a few seconds to orientate herself, to be aware of the window in front of her, the bright candle light behind. All of a sudden noticing Daryl's reflection; he's standing just behind her, looming, looking down over her shoulder. She freezes like a deer caught in bright headlights. Eyes wide and face slack, honestly shocked that he just seemed to appear.

Daryl moves closer. She flushes so intensely she can feel the blood rushing under her skin. He rocks up on his toes, getting a better view over her shoulder down to where she is spread open. Beth can feel the heat from him at her back, through the thick vest. It matches the embarrassment burning through her.

His clothing brushes her skin lightly. Fingers tug on the bottom edge of the vest, brushing against her thigh. He falls back onto his heels before he speaks. Voice bright, almost delighted.

"Well, ain't ya just a redneck wet dream."

She starts to remove her fingers. Sucks in a ragged breath. His hand wrapping around her wrist stops her with her finger tips still nestled between her soaked labia.

"Nah, don't ya stop." He pushes himself fully against her back, folding himself around her. "I wanna see."

Her eyes find his in the reflection on the window. Her heart races. There is nothing to be ashamed of. He's smirking. Her fingers push back in. Can't help but sighing as her body makes a wet squelch. She twitches, feeling weak. For a second worrying her knees will buckle. She recovers, hips rolling more smoothly as his hands find her waist.

"That's it, keep going." he speaks softly, right into her ear.

He's crowding in to her back, but he's not helping. His hands at her waist, holding her but not touching her where she needs him. So she keeps rubbing her thumb roughly across her clit and keeps the two fingers hooked inside her vagina, pushing and pressing.

"I wan ya to cum on your own fingers." He orders and she obeys, almost instantly.

She folds in on herself, whole body bending forward towards her bent knee as her muscles clench. His grip on her waist tightening as he grinds against her backside. After a minute his hands run up and down her arms, helping her relax and unfurl. She leans back into his chest. Turning her face into his neck. Smiling as she greets him.

"Hey"

He turns her around, humming appreciatively as he runs his fingers down the front edges of his vest, pushing it back just enough to see her nipples. Always happy to get a peak at her.

"Hey ya'self" He answers, his smile getting wider.

He pounces, picking her up and hauling her against him. Bare skin rubbing against his jeans, belt and shirt. His arms tight around her, squeezing as he buries his face in her neck. Her feet dangling off the ground. Then he tosses her down onto the nest. Daryl's pulling his clothes off before she's done bouncing. Naked and hovering over her caging her in with his arms and weight before her brain can really catch up.

He's hungry and eager and she is so excited. Aroused and so happy to be of service. She can make him feel good. Making him feel good makes her feel amazing. He's rubbing against her and kissing and muttering into her skin. Gosh she loves it when he talks. She wants to hear it all. He is a quiet man but he doesn't hesitate when it comes to this. It's like he knows what it does to her. Like he enjoys the way it seems to increase everything she's already feeling when he curses against her skin.

She pushes at his chest. When he moves back she pulls her legs out from under him and turns onto her side. He's looking down brows furrowed.

"What's happening?" He questions.

In answer her fingers reach out, grasping his hips, pulling him forward while she explains, "You should come over here."

Still confused, but following her instructions without hesitation, he shuffles forward on his knees. He's hard, swollen and heavy. She keeps tugging at him until he's kneeling right beside her head. He's bracing an arm on the wall at the back of the nest staring down at her. She runs her palms over his thighs while she rolls more fully onto her side. Rubbing her nose into the crease of his thigh, feeling his coarse pubic hair and breathing deeply the musky raw scent of him. Kissing and licking at his erection, soaking it and then taking him into her mouth.

"God, ya look so fucking pretty like that." His fingers are rubbing at her cheek, his voice tender and face soft.

She's moaning and rubbing her thighs together. Soaked and aching to cum again. She feels wild. She couldn't possibly stay still. It doesn't take long and he's thrusting into her mouth. She's drooling and choking a little. She wiggles around until she finds the perfect angle and he slides right into her throat with every thrust.

He's talking and cursing bent almost in half. One arm on the wall the other grabbing roughly at her breasts. Her hands are on his thighs but they are hardly moving she's really just grounding herself. She's on fire, her heart is racing, her sex is throbbing and the way he's looking down at her is totally overwhelming.

Then he moves his hand from her breast down between her legs. When he spreads her lips and pushes against her clit she can't control the way her hips lift and push against him, chasing the pressure. When he pushes two fingers into her she groans so loudly the drool on the corners of her mouth bubbles and smears against his skin.

"Jesus fucking Christ." His hips stutter as he groans.

Daryl leans back thrusting more shallowly into her mouth so that his fingers can reach deeper. His thumb swiping harshly at her swollen clit. She's just about to tip over the edge when he wrenches himself away from her. Before she can fully come back to herself he's above her. Hands on either side of her face. Kissing her hard as he slides inside her with no resistance.

His thrusts are deep and forceful. He gathers her wrists in one of his hands, pinning them above her head. Anchoring her in place as he rubs his full body against her with each snap of his hips.

It feels like he is everywhere. Inside her and surrounding her, on her tongue and burrowed into her grey matter. It's too much. She breaks apart, coming completely undone. Shaking and convulsing under Daryl as his knot stretches and fills her.

He recovers first. Propped up on one elbow staring down at her. Still holding her wrists loosely above her head as she holds him tightly within.

"Ya got no idea what you do to me. Can't even think I want ya so bad."

She blushes, but doesn't avoid his gaze, "Thought ya said it wasn't like that?"

"Hmm, been thinking I might've been wrong."

"Oh ya?" She's aiming for nonchalant but her heart is hammering again suddenly.

Is he really saying she sent him into rut? That has to mean something, right? Something important.

"Came in here thinking about security. Dead set on nailing down a plan for rations and better patrols. Every thought gone right outta my head the second I seen ya."

"When ya see me? Really?" She can't help but smile, he sounds so sweet almost earnest.

"Don't look so smug. Makes sense." His tone is light, teasing.

"I know, but I still like to hear it." Her words make him smirk.

"Seems like ya like doing an awful lot when it comes to me." He reaches down and pinches her side.

"Daryl!" She shrieks.

Laughing she shifts away from his fingers. The action pulls at his knot. Leaving her breathless and panting once again. Once she is recovered he smooths the hair away from her face then presses a kiss to her forehead. He takes a deep breath then seems to brace himself before speaking, voice much more serious this time.

"But I do think this situation has made me a bit too optimistic about our safety. We got to be prepared, ready to move on."

"Ok. Whatever you think needs doing. I trust ya." She knew he would be thinking over every angle.

"Ya do?"

Beth doesn't really understand why he sounds surprised. Doesn't he get it? She's trusted him with her life, her body and her entire future. She has trusted him more than she's ever trusted anyone.

"Of course I do."

Chapter 8: VIII

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It's the first night since Beth started her heat that Daryl doesn't sleep. He can't stop thinking, puzzling over this place and these supplies. Eventually he has to admit that it's likely this whole place is a trap. It's designed to make you settle down and stay put. Not a quick snare but a way to get someone comfortable and off their guard, to have them stick around till whoever comes to collect. Daryl is not sure to what end but he'd bet it's nothing good.

It's like a bubble has burst. He had been completely stuck in the moment. Nothing existed beyond this nest and her. Now he knows they can't stay here forever. He's thinking about the fact her heat will burn out. This is going to end. He's trying to imagine what that will look like for him and for Beth. His thoughts are racing, he thinks of one thing then spirals off onto something else.

There is no doubt that keeping Beth safe, alive, had been his primary focus even before her heat. It was the one thing keeping him going after the prison fell. What does he want now, exactly? He wants to protect her, same as he did before, but more. It's deeply instinctual; more specific, more intense, more hands on.

Daryl is lying next to Beth wide awake, fidgeting and thinking when, all of a sudden, the fog seems to clear from his mind and he realizes he knows exactly what he wants. It's difficult to admit, even just to himself. A mate is not something he's ever thought about. Yet there is no denying it, he wants to keep her tied to him.

Daryl knows what this could be. He knows how serious a bond is, the effect it can have. He knows his mother didn't stay in that shit hole he grew up in for no reason. Bonds are nothing to scoff at, they are a powerful link, but this is the first time it crosses his mind that it could work both ways. That an omega could have that sort of hold over him. That the connection does not have to be completely dominated by the alpha.

Daryl tries to dissect what this revelation really means. That connection, a bond, the start of a pack could be a huge boon to surviving. They are a pretty good team, as a mated pair they could be something amazing, powerful and in sync. On the flip side that level of connection would also create a vulnerability, the potential for a shattering loss.

He knows that on some level he has a decision to make. Except, maybe, it was made the second he followed her into that room. Daryl kinda suspects there is no coming back from this. That his feelings aren't going to change when her heat burns out and his rut runs its course. He's totally gone on her, deeply invested. Whatever she asks for he'll try his hardest to give her, but he's going to keep letting her lead. No way will he let himself do anything if she doesn't ask first.

As he watches the window lighten with the dawn, his arms wrapped around his bed mate, he feels changed for his realization. He needs to move, an energy buzzing beneath his skin, but

doesn't want to disturb her. Beth is still deeply asleep, unaware of his emotional breakthrough. He takes the opportunity to examine her up close. He tries to memorize the details of her face. The freckles scattered across the bridge of her nose. A little patch high on one cheek that's a slightly darker shade of beige. How the bow in her lips is fuller on one side. How blond her eyelashes are. She's still the same woman that got into the nest with him last night but the feelings when he looks at her now can't be held back or pushed down.

Beth starts to move and squirm, slowly surfacing from a deep sleep. Daryl feels like a teenager trying to remember how to play it cool he's so nervous. Like he hasn't already been inside her, seen her cum countless times, fucking bathed her and brushed her hair. That knowledge does nothing to stop his sweaty palms and racing heart. What the fuck. He's got to get this under control. He's not some lovesick puppy. Shit, he's not even scared she's going to tell him to pound sand. Even if she totally changes track and decides she doesn't want him around once this burns out she's not going to be mean about it. It's an impossibility, she just doesn't do mean. So what's he so afraid of?

She's rubbing the sleep from her eyes when Daryl starts talking. He keeps his voice soft and doesn't share all of his worries about this place but tells her tonight has to be their last night here. His goal is movement not panic. So he concentrates on what they need to do to prep for their exit.

"I think foods the most important thing. We'll want some water, but it's heavy so we should concentrate on food as much as possible."

Sleepy and sweet she is agreeing with everything he suggests. It's all smiles and enthusiastic nodding. Excited little interjections about what food stuffs would be best and what toiletries they should make room for. He's not sure how he feels about her unwavering support for his ideas, excited or terrified, or maybe both.

The plan is for him to get supplies while Beth eats breakfast and washes up, then they can organize everything together. He's working up to it but can't bring himself to let her leave their den yet. Daryl starts with a thorough search of the building. This time looking for more than just supplies. Afterward he is confident they are alone in the house. He hasn't been able to find any tunnels or secret entrances, no false walls of peep holes. Has to assume whatever is coming will come from outside.

During his search he digs through the office at the back of the house. Finds some letterhead with the address, compares it to a map he found in the hall closet and finally knows where they actually are for the first time in weeks. Further from the prison than he had imagined. Still no farther than he could have driven in three or four hours before.

In one of the desk drawers he finds a pamphlet from the Cohutta Wilderness. Protected by the National Forest Service and BLM the three page advert boasts of classic blue ridge beauty on rugged, remote lands spanning nearly 36,000 acres. Claims to be the largest wilderness area east of the Mississippi.

The back side of the brochure is a map and short list of attractions. The one that catches Daryl's attention is the Grassy Mountain fire lookout tower. A 6.5 mile round-trip hike from The Lake Conasauga picnic and day use area. Perched on the summit of Grassy Mountain,

nestled deep in the Cohutta Wilderness, there is a weathered, gray, steel fire lookout tower that rises from a tree-lined mountaintop, offering exceptional, long-range views of nearby Fort Mountain. It's not a real plan but a direction to head. Something worth checking out. It's more than he had before.

Now he has to turn this direction into something real. What should they do? When are they leaving? How are they traveling when Beth's in heat? Are they in trouble? Could they actually be safe here for a few more days? it would be the easiest, finish her heat then leave. He doesn't know how he knows it, but he's certain she still has a few days to go, that same primitive sense tells Daryl they will not be safe here much longer.

Daryl stacks food on the bottom steps. Intending to bring it with when he heads back up. There is fruit leather, granola bars, grape jelly, a jar of peanut butter, a bag of oatmeal and one of rice. He'll get more next time he's down. Decides to head out and check on things. He knows he has to step up his patrols; has get out more often, be stealthier and cover a larger perimeter. Now that he's so certain this is place is too good to be true he has to do more. It won't do if they get snuck up on just when they are preparing to leave.

Daryl stands in the shadow cast by the building. He takes a few minutes to listen. Hears birds in the eaves, they rustle and the old metal creaks and then three barn swallows woosh out over the graveyard. A squirrel rummages around in the long grass along the side of the funeral home. The wind moves the leaves in the trees. Confident there is no sound of walkers Daryl heads to the tree line.

He takes a longer path than he had on his previous patrols, crisscrossing through the woods that surround the property. There are some fresh walker tracks in the soft dirt, but not a herd, looks like only one stumbled through alone. Nothing to worry about. He's about half way through his loop when he hears scuttling in the leaf litter behind him. He whips around with his bow raised and finds a scruffy white dog blinking at him. Daryl squats down and tries to coax the pup over. It stays back, but doesn't run off. Eventually Daryl shrugs and gets back to his loop. The white dog follows at a distance, seeming to watch with some interest. Daryl is headed towards the back steps, mulling over what food he should grab to try and convince the little bugger to come inside when he realizes the dog has disappeared.

Back up in their den he finally feels the nervous energy that has been plaguing him for hours bleeding out from his system. He's taking the food he brought up and adding a bit to each of their packs while telling Beth about his little visitor.

"A dog! Out there all alone?" She sounds scandalized, "How on earth?"

"I don't know, I didn't manage to get his whole life's story." Daryl can't help but laugh, she's already so invested in the dog. "Looked like a scrappy little fucker. I'd guess he does ok for himself."

She looks angelic to him. Her eyes are big, cheeks rosy, smile wide. There is messy blonde hair catching the sunlight and looking like a halo and she's clouded in literally mouth watering pheromones. He needs to get closer to her. So he crawls into the mess of blankets, snaking her arms around her wasit.

Lips pressed against the shell of her ear he whispers, "What have you been up here thinking about while I was out making friends?" He wiggles his eyebrows hoping he can make her blush.

"Um," Beth hesitates and her scent shifts, "I've been thinking about what we should do next."

Now her eyes are downcast, barely glancing at him, hiding behind her hair. Fear or nerves clearly broadcast to him. Daryl swears his heart skips a beat. His skin tingles, ears ring. Nerves back in full.

"I was wondering if we should find a place to hunker down for the winter. Or if we should be out looking for some sign of the others?"

"No easy answer, not with this." He keeps his voice soft and steady, not sure where she's going with this.

"Expect maybe there kinda is." She rings her hands, "The more I thought on it I figured no matter what we gotta find a place, a home base. That's gotta be step one." She's gaining momentum voice getting stronger.

"We can't just head out looking for our people with no supplies, without being rested and having full bellies. We'll make a poor search party if we're knocking on death's door. Once we're settled we can go out, look for supplies and our people." It's a statement; she's not asking if they should she's telling him what she wants them to do.

"Makes sense, down right logical even." He agrees instantly.

Like he would fight her. He wants to kiss her. He fucking loves this plan. She's finally putting her own safety ahead of the rest of the group.

"It doesn't mean we'd be giving up, being selfish?" This time it is a question and her voice cracks a little. The strength from before gone as she looks for his reassurance.

He chews the skin on his thumb and thinks on the question seriously, "Nah, Sweetheart." Tries to infuse his voice with authority. To be the strong and reassuring Alpha for her. "If we don't survive the winter what hope do we have of helping anyone."

She snuggles into his side, clearly relieved by his agreement. "I just couldn't bear it if they thought we forgot about them."

Daryl doesn't reply to that. He has serious doubts that any of their old group is sparing any thought for them. Doesn't want to infect Beth and ruin her optimism, needs to keep her motivated. Instead he brings the conversation back to their next steps.

"I found something this morning. Might have an idea of where that home base could be." He tries to be casual but he can't tamp down the excitement in his voice.

He can feel her watching him. Her gaze is heavy, tangible. So he gets out the brochure and starts explaining which part he's interested in and how he thinks it could work.

"Daryl that's amazing, such a great idea!" She's so excited, anyone else he would assume it was fake, but he knows this woman doesn't have a fake bone in her body.

"When we have a solid home we won't be left scrambling for a secure place to den when my next heat comes." She goes on starting to ramble with excitement, "Not sure how long it will be. I had heard it can a bit random at first, before ya settle into a cycle. Might happen two or three times a year."

Beth is going on but most of it is going in one ear and out the other. He's kind of stuck on the fact she's been thinking about her next heat. That she just assumes it's a thing they will be doing together. Daryl isn't so sure how she'll feel once her heat is burnt out. But he likes the way it makes him feel to hear her plan like they will be together for her next heat.

"Ya think ya gonna spend your next one with me?" He can't help but interrupt her with his question.

"I'm being hopeful!" she exclaims, "Nothing bad is going to happen to either of us. We're going to build a good place. We'll be together, secure and stocked up, be ready for the next heat. We're going to get good at this."

She shrugs off the conversation and heads to the bathroom. Flashing him a brilliant smile as she leaves the room. It feels like his mind can't catch up. She's hoping her next heat will be with him.

"We ain't exactly bad at it now, Greene." He hollers after her, like he just can't help himself.

Her laughter floats out of the bathroom. Once again, he finds himself relived she seems to find him charming, even when he's just being a horn dog. Daryl is floored. That she would assume they will keep doing this, that the only way they wouldn't is if one of them died, makes his chest tight.

He waits until he hears the lid close on the toilet before he stalks after her. Needs to be sure she really means it. That she understands what she's saying. Daryl corners her on her way out of the bathroom. Pushing her back and crowding her into the counter.

"Daryl, what is it?" She blushes so sweetly

"Ya really want your next heat with me? What if we find other people?" He questions.

Her face falls, "I mean..." She wrings her hands... "If you don't want to I'm sure I can figure something else out."

He feels like a shit head when he smells the distress lacing her previously sweet pheromones. Can see tears pooling in her eyes.

"Shhhhhh I wanna be the one ya heat with." He nuzzles into the crook of her neck. "I just wanted to be sure that's what ya really wanted. Just trying to know what you're thinking. Ya know I gotta do right by ya, Girl."

"Daryl, I like what we been doing." She sighs and tilts her head back, giving him better access to her soft skin.

"Been feeling pretty right to me. I was thinking we don't have to stop." She groans when he licks at her, "No reason we have to. If ya wanted."

"Ya sayin ya be up for us to keep fucking even after your heat?" He punctuates the question with a firm roll of his hips against her.

"If ya'd want to." Her voice sounds so small, gaze glued to the tile floor.

"I done told ya, remember, I always want to." His fingers press against her jaw, forcing her eyes up, "Anytime ya want, Sweetheart. Anything ya need. Ya just gotta ask."

"Even after this is done?"

"Always gonna want ya." He kisses her, wanting her to understand just how serious he is, "Never going to need an excuse."

He steps back and lifts her up onto the counter. Sinking down onto his knees. His fingers pull her labia apart and then he's licking into her. Tenderly sucking on her clit while he works his fingers into her over and over. Her thighs start to shake, her pussy clutching at him as she cums. Before she can catch her breath he stands and bends down to kiss her. Excited to share the tangy and salty taste on his lips while he loosens his belt and steps out of his pants.

"God ya got the prettiest pussy I ever seen." He grunts out as he steps between her knees and pushes into her.

He's rocking back on his heels with his chin tucked into his chest. Watching his dick slip in and out of her. It's mesmerizing. When he gets going he hooks one knee up on the counter top. Practically crawling into her with each thrust. Her head smacking against the mirror, fingers dug into his forearms like she is barely hanging on for the ride.

"Jesus you fit me so perfectly"

He nuzzles at her neck, sucking and licking. When his teeth scrape sharply against the pale skin covering her scent gland she cums so fucking sweetly. Cunt squeezing so tight he's almost pushed out of her. He fucks back into her hard. Hindbrain absolutely screaming at him to secure her as his mate. He pulls himself back, uses every ounce of self control, cultivated through years of taking his father's belt, to reign himself in and keep his teeth out of her skin.

He does not bite her, but he thinks about it. Imagines her blood in his mouth as his knot explodes deep inside her. Keeps telling himself he will not bite her unless she asks him too. He won't do anything she doesn't want, ever.

He hauls her off the hard counter, a deep pressure where they are locked together. Arms wrapped under her ass supporting her as he stumbles to sitting on the toilet. She's slumped into his chest, breathing harsh and eyes barely open. He's not much better, thighs burning and skin tingling. He presses tender kisses to her hair line and ignores the wetness he feels at the

corners of his eyes.

She's dozing, exhausted all over again. Their packs are filled and Daryl is pacing up and down the hall trying to figure out how the hell he's going to get her out of this place safely tomorrow. It's slow going by foot at the best of times, but she's barely going to be moving tomorrow. Not to mention the effort it's going to take for him to push down his instincts and actually let her out in the open. His situational awareness and decision making ability will be trash. To make things even harder everything is only going to get worse the longer they are exposed. Honestly he had no idea how else he can prepare, it's just something they are going to have to push through.

When he's about to loop back towards the top of the stairs he hears a crash from out front. Sounds like the over grown garbage cans beside the front stairs falling over.

"Scruffy son of a bitch." Daryl mutters under his breath as he starts down the stairs expecting to find the little dog rummaging in the bins.

The front door is still blocked by the hutch he dragged out of the dining room when they first arrived. Instead of trying to shuffle it out of the way and open the door he goes into the front room and pulls back the curtain on the big window. He lets it fall back into place almost instantly.

"God damned mother fuckers."

He's still cursing as he takes the stairs two at a time. He bursts through the door and stops short. Beth is very naked snuggled into a pile of blankets and she is looking at him like he hung the fucking moon. His hind brain stands up and shouts *I want that*.

He stalks over, grabs her ankle and pulls her towards him. She fucking smiles.

"Greene." It's a warning.

One she promptly ignores by spreading her legs. Wide. Brings one knee up and out to the side while the other ankle slides around Daryl's calf pulling against him until he relents and falls to kneeling between her legs. His palms find the soft skin on the inside of her thighs.

"We gotta move."

She sighs loudly and smiles up at him. Expectantly.

Drags his finger tips lightly over her labia. Gently massaging at the puffy lips. So wet they slip apart with no resistance. Granting his fingers access with just light pressure. He takes a few seconds to watch his finger slipping into her.

"I love it when ya look at me like that." Her voice is almost a whisper, and she's wearing that dazed, dreamy expression he's gotten so familiar with.

"We can't stay, time to get moving." He coaxes, but his fingers keep moving.

She groans, "Feels real good."

He knows they need to get out of here. They can't stay, but his fingers are tucked inside her and she wants to fuck. She always wants to fuck. Why would now be any different?

A loud bang from downstairs shatters the moment. Her eyes widen and her her scent turns sour. He pulls her up. Throwing the clothes that were folded on the chair at her.

"They ain't getting in yet. But there is a lot of 'em. We gotta move. Can ya run if ya need to?"

She's pulling on her jeans and gulping for air but nods, her eyes hard and determined.

"Ya just tell me what to do. I'll do it."

She holds his shoulders as he jams her feet into boots. Then he scents the crap out of her, fast and harsh, roughly rubbing his wrists against all her exposed skin; hands, neck, and face. Trying to completely cover her heat scent with his own. Wraps her in his flannel shoving the length of her hair down into the collar, and lifts the first pack so she can slide her arms into the straps.

"Ya stay by my side. No matter what." He's holding her gaze, hands heavy on her shoulders, using every ounce of alpha authority he can find.

He kisses her forehead and swings on the second pack. Grabs up his bow as he's herding her out into the hall and down the stairs before she can try to grab anything else. The noise from the walkers is much louder as they descend the stairs. Daryl knows it won't be long until they are coming through the front door. He guides her into the kitchen and they slip out the back and are swallowed up by the darkening night.

Daryl pulls her across the graveyard to the tree line. They make their way through the brush until they are beside the road and a ways down from the building. They pause and he takes a moment to let his vision adjust to the dark and tries to assess the scene. All he can hear is the frenzy of the walkers, he's leaning around a tree trying to get a better view of the front door so he can figure out how many there really are when Beth grabs his arm. She points away from the house to a dark shadow in the road. Daryl goes completely still when he processes what he is looking at, then he's nodding setting his pack down and then pulling hers off. He grabs the knife at her hip out of it's sheath and presses it into her palm.

"Right behind me. You're my fucking shadow."

They step out from the trees, cross to the other side of street silently. They are about 300 feet behind the car, Daryl right ahead of her, with his crossbow loaded and raised.

There are two men crouched behind the small sedan. It's hard to tell the color of the vehicle but, even in the dark, it's easy to see the large white cross on the back window. The engine is off and the doors are open. They watch a group of maybe 20 undead throw themselves against the front of the funeral home. The Walkers have no interest in the living. It takes Daryl a minute to see in the low light but it looks like they are being driven into a frenzy by something smeared on the front of the building. Blood and chunks of meat. Daryl takes a second to think of the scruffy little dog, hoping this wasn't his fate.

There is no conscious choice to attack. One second their sneaking down the road and the next his hind brain is completely in control, like he is a passenger in his own body. He shoots an arrow into the larger man's back then swings his bow into the side of the other's head. Before either man can get back to their feet red bleeds across his vision like a thick haze. Everything becomes a frenzy of violence and anger. Everything is pure brutality. It's as if he is swept along in a tidal wave of rage. He burns with it.

Daryl is on his knees in the gravel panting when the trance-like fury seems to just leave him. Their corpses, pulpy bloody lumps of flesh with jagged shards of bone lie on the blood soaked road around him. His face is coated in their blood. It's on his hands, up his forearms and soaked into his shirt. He stills, breathing deeply through his nose for a minute before he just sort of sinks in on himself.

Beth had watched Daryl's attack, frozen with a sort of shocked awe. Now she kicks into action. They need to leave and they need to do it quickly. The dead won't stay occupied for long.

She's pulling on him, calling his name and trying to drag him towards the car, but he's unresponsive. Any progress they manage is excruciatingly slow. He doesn't acknowledge her and she keeps stopping to take down walkers that are drawn from the frenzy on the steps by the noise she's making. Finally she stops pleading with him.

"Get up." It's an order, ground out in a harsh whisper, and he obeys her instantly.

His eyes still blank but his body upright under its own power.

"Move." She leads him, and he follows like a lost child.

She folds him into the passenger seat with no resistance. She slams the door and darts around the front of the car. Their bags are back at the tree line and Daryl's bow is on the ground with the two men. Somehow she manages to drag both packs over at once without making too much of a ruckus. She loads them into the back seat and heads for the bow. Two of the undead are close and Beth is ready to drop Daryl's bow and grab her knife when they get distracted by the mess in the street.

Beth packs the bow away, thankful she won't have to tell him it's lost and slides into the driver's seat. The keys are in the ignition and the engine turns over on the first try. Whoever was driving was way taller than her, she can barely reach the pedals but that doesn't stop her from absolutely peeling out leaving the walkers in a cloud of burnt rubber and smoke. She drives for about 15 minutes. Trying to put as much distance between them and that scene as she can. Then she pulls over because she's shaking too hard to keep the car steady.

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Daryl comes back to himself with a start. It's dark and he's in a parked car staring straight ahead. When he looks down he realizes he is coated in blood. He tries to wipe his palms on his pants but it doesn't seem to do much. He remembers the walkers and the men in the street, losing control. He remembers flashes of violence. Bones breaking, blood spurting, but can't piece together how it all happened.

"What did ya do?" He rubs the heels of his palms into his eyes.

"Ya stupid fuck, what did ya do?" Shakes his head back and forth willing himself to remember.

"Oh god... Beth!" It's not a scream only because he can't breath.

He's trying to suck in air but his chest is too tight. His limbs are like concrete. Sweat pouring down his face. It feels like his heart is about to actually burst when there is a noise beside him. A high pitched whine. She's in the driver's seat, he hadn't even registered that he wasn't behind the wheel. Her eyes are wide and glassy, she's shaking but she's alive. The relief he feels is indescribable. That moment, where he was so sure he had killed her when he lost control, was the scariest fucking thing he's ever experienced.

He opens the door and almost falls out of the car. Stumbles around to her side and opens the door slowly, talking in a quiet murmur.

"Beth.

Sweetheart, you're ok.

We're safe now.

Ya did such a good job."

He runs his hands up and down her arms before she relaxes and drops them from the wheel. He unbuckles her seat belt, taking a second to wonder how she got that on in the middle of that cluster fuck, and pulls her out of the vehicle. They tumble into the dirt and he hauls her into his lap.

He doesn't think, just curls around her and rubs his face against her. Trying to achieve as much contact between them as possible. She's sobbing and holding his head to her chest, running her fingers over his filthy hair, mumbling his name like a prayer. After a min she sags, her body giving out. The aftermath of adrenaline mixing with her heat hormones, leaving her exhausted and spent. He lets himself rest with her cradled in his arms for a few minutes and then bundles her into the passenger seat.

The lights from the dash let Daryl examine the map from the funeral home. Once he figures where they ended up the map gets stored in the console and they pull back into the road. Daryl keeps the speed and the lights low, hoping they don't attract any more attention. Thank fuck he knows where he's headed, what direction to go and what road signs to be on the look out for. It leaves him with just enough mental capacity to completely freak out, because now he knows it will actually destroy him to loose her.

Chapter End Notes

That's the end of the funeral home arc, but it turns out I have a few more plans for our favourite couple.

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